

PLUCK AND LUCK

A HAUNTED BOY OR THE MAD-HOUSE MYSTERY

AND OTHER STORIES

By Allan Arnold



The sick woman in the bed covered her face with her hands to shut out the sight of the struggle. There came a crash as the lock was burst open. In rushed Bill and Hank, two of the keepers.

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A HAUNTED BOY

OR, THE MAD-HOUSE MYSTERY

By ALLAN ARNOLD

CHAPTER I.—The Schoolboy's History.

It was midday on the 10th of May, 18—, when the train from Albany came thundering into the depot at Irvingdale-on-the-Hudson, and a fine, handsome-looking boy alighted. He was apparently about sixteen years of age, attired in a neat suit of clothing, and carried a small valise and an umbrella. His dark-brown eyes swept a rapid glance around at the surroundings of the pretty, but sleepy-looking depot, and the scattered village beyond, with a curious look of expectancy. The boy had hardly taken in this view when he heard a loud noise proceeding from the road in back of the depot, the shout of a man, the scream of a woman, the pounding of horses' hoofs, and the rapid rumble of wagon wheels. Glancing through the depot windows, he was startled to see a buggy containing a lady and gentleman come rushing down the road, the horse wild and unmanageable from being frightened at the puffing locomotive that just then went roaring away.

"A runaway!" muttered the boy, dropping his valise and umbrella. "The beast may kill that lady unless it is checked. I'll risk it."

Like a flash he darted out in the middle of the road, and as the horse was almost on the point of trampling him down, he sprang up, caught the check-line on either side of its head, swung his legs up around the shaft, out of the way of the flying hoofs, and hung on. He brought the horse to a pause—conquered—with in a few yards of the depot, released it, and cried out cheerily to the dark-dressed lady.

"There you are, madam, safe and sound, thank heaven!"

The woman wore a crape veil over her face, and instead of replying, she burst into tears, with the realization that her danger was over. Just then the gentleman approached, brushing the dust off his clothing, looking all mussed up, and said, in hasty tones:

"Brave boy, by Jove! How can I thank you enough?"

"Oh, I am glad to have been of service, sir," replied the lad.

He was uninjured, and glanced at the gentleman. Truth to tell, he was unprepossessed by the man's looks, though. He was about forty years of age, dressed in black, wore a high silk

hat, was short, wiry and slender, and had a clean-shaven face. Rather a professional-looking personage, the boy surmised, and his white necktie would have aroused the belief that he was a minister, were it not for the sinister look of his face.

"You are modest," said the man, bending a sharp look at the boy out of his singular-looking eyes, for they were utterly devoid of lashes and eyebrows, making his big nose look much longer. "My name is Dr. Caleb Crane," he continued, "and I see you are a stranger here. I have charge of the large, private insane asylum up there."

He pointed at the gray stone building upon the bluff, and the boy replied:

"Yes, I am a stranger here, and I am glad to know you, sir."

"Do you intend to remain at Irvingdale?"

"I do. I was born here, sir, but have been absent since I was five years of age. I have just returned from Albany, where I have been at college ever since, for my mother sent for me."

To the boy's surprise, he saw an expression of eager interest appear upon the man's face, and the woman bent suddenly forward in the buggy, as if intensely anxious over something.

"You don't say!" said Dr. Crane. "And your name?"

"My name is Ruric Gruesome."

An exclamation burst involuntarily from the lips of both the man and the woman, increasing the boy's surprise, and he saw them both start convulsively, recoil from him, and then recover. The physician was the first to speak.

"I know your mother," said he, with an effort. "She is a patient of mine, whom I have been attending for a week past."

"Indeed!" said the boy. "I did not know she was ill."

He tapped his forehead significantly and replied:

"I feel sorry for you. She is slightly affected here."

"What—crazy?"

"No; but in a singular state from neuralgia. Nothing more. It sometimes gets serious, but she will be herself in a day or two."

"I have not seen her in eleven years," said

Ruric, "but in the interval she has frequently written to me and never mentioned sickness."

"Of course not. Why should she, by Jove? Eleven years absent? And I suppose your father you at last, eh?"

"Ah, that is something I do not know, sir. I don't remember ever having seen him. My mother once wrote me, though, that he and she quarreled, parted—he went to sea and she stayed here. He wanted to get possession of me, I believe, and to frustrate that design she sent me away secretly to the school where I have been reared and educated, and there I have remained ever since."

"A queer history, by Jove! So she sent for you a—eh?"

"Yesterday, sir. Here I am now, and I don't know where she lives."

"Ha! ha! ha! How funny! Can't you find your own home? That's a singular position to be placed in. But I need hardly direct you, for here comes her man-of-all-work with a wagon, no doubt to fetch you home, so I'll bid you good-day, hoping you will call to see me soon, and thanking you again."

He bowed to the boy, got into the buggy without saying a word to the silent woman, and gathering up the reins of the now pacific horse, he darted a strange glance at Ruric and drove away. Ruric walked back to the depot, picked up his valise and umbrella just as the four-wheeled surrey paused near by, and a good-natured-looking man beckoned to him.

"Be you Master Ruric?" was the rustic's query.

"That's my name," replied the boy.

"Tho't so. Step in. — Your mother sent me for you. I'm Dan what works for her, you know."

"My mother is sick, Dr. Crane just told me?"

"Yes," nodded Dan, with a visible lengthening of his face at mention of the physician's name. "And instid of getting better, since he's been a-doctoring her she's worse, I think. I s'pose you know he's your uncle by marriage, don't you?"

"My uncle! Why, no! I didn't know I ever had an aunt," said Ruric, "for you know I've been away from home a good many years, and my correspondence with my mother has always been meagre, she never telling me anything about her family."

"Now don't you?" said Dan, opening his pale-blue eyes wide with surprise. "Well, it ain't strange thought, after all, considering how long you've been gone. Besides, your mother ain't one to say much about her past, as it must have been a sad one."

"Then that must have been my aunt with the doctor?" asked Ruric.

"Her? No," replied Dan, shaking his yellow hair, dubiously. "She must be someone else. Your aunt died abroad, you know, when she ran away with the doctor, and married him against her parents' wishes. That was over a year ago, you know, and when he came back to the asylum again and took charge, why, he wore a widower's weeds, and never went nigh the old folks in New York, as they were dead set against him, always."

"Did my mother know all this?"

"Of course she did. She don't like Caleb Crane, either, but had to have him attend her, as he's

the only doctor hereabouts. She and her sister Maud were bad friends before Maud's death, too, I'm told, for your mother did the same thing Maud Forrester did, and that was to marry a sailor chap, Godfrey Gruesome, your father, against her folks' wishes. Maud sided with the parents, but that was before she did the very same thing herself."

"Oh!" said Ruric, nodding. "What ailed my grandparents?"

"Well, it's said they were mighty rich and proud, and wanted their daughters to marry better than either a lunatic housekeeper or a sailor, and I believe they disowned their children on that account."

"Your mother once quarreled with your father over it, as Julia Forrester was proud, and marked the distinction between herself and him. It cut Godfrey Gruesome, for he was a high-spirited man, and they separated. You know how he tried to get you. But your mother was too smart for him, and sent you away to the school you've been at ever since. Your father couldn't find you, so he left your mother, and went to sea, I believe, and that's the last ever seen or heard of him since. But the old folks relented, I'm told, when they found out what her husband did. On account of Maud doing the same thing, right on top of your mother being abandoned by her husband, why, they sent your mother so much money every month ever since, and that's how she's lived."

Ruric's whole history was disclosed to him now by the garrulous Dan, and by the time it ended they reached the cottage.

Entering, the boy was met by a servant, a dark-featured woman of forty, of French appearance, and telling her who he was, she smiled queerly at him and asked him to follow her upstairs. Conducting him to a bed-chamber, she opened the door, told him his mother was inside, and then followed him in. It was an ordinary bedroom, nicely furnished, and upon the bed lay a woman of about thirty-five, with her eyes closed. Hearing him enter, she suddenly sprang to her feet, and the next moment she had Ruric clasped in her arms, and was shedding tears of joy over the boy, as she kissed him again and again, and commenced to question him about his past career.

CHAPTER II.—A Dark Night's Work.

"And you have been sick, mother?"

"Yes. Ruric, I cannot understand it, my mind is strangely becoming affected, and at times within the past week I feel as if I was becoming actually mad! Queer sensations overwhelm me immediately after I finish my meals, and it seems to me that I lose my mind."

"You have no enemies who would try to poison you, have you?"

"What a wild notion! Why, no! Of course not. Who would want to poison me? Why should anyone design such a thing wantonly? My death would not gratify a revenge, as I have no enemies, nor would it benefit anyone in the way of gain. Yet every time I finish eating I am affected as I said."

"An', par dieu, so you shall be to ze end, my lady!" softly muttered the woman in the hall.

"Ze powdair soon have ze desiair effect an' zen ve see eef you not become mad—mad—mad! Ah, eet ees ze ver' cleveair vay ze doctair tell me—zat I poot ze stuff een your food. Ma foi, eet eez ze subtle vay!"

Marie had a small notebook in her hand and a pencil, and as the boy and his mother continued in their conversation she rapidly inscribed all their dialogue in the book in shorthand. Unaware that the spying servant was listening to all they said, ignorant of her sinister motives, and innocent of the idea that she was the authoress of Mrs. Gruesome's ailment (at the instigation of Dr. Caleb Crane), the boy and his mother went on with their conversation several hours longer, and at last separated, the woman to sleep, Ruric to go to his room. Then on a pretext to her mistress, in order to get out of the house, Marie donned her bonnet, and, leaving the cottage with her notebook in her pocket, she hurried away. The sun was going down, and she selected the shady side of a road leading out of the village toward the madhouse. Arrived at the plank fence iron gate, beside which stood a small lodge, the woman rang a bell-knob, a gong vented a clang, a rough-looking man emerged from the lodge, opened the gate, nodded surlily to her, and she sped up the broad graveled walk, winding among the flower-beds, toward the asylum. Marie Montmedy's small, beady, black eyes snapped as she mounted the steps, rang the bell, and was admitted by Dr. Crane himself.

"Ah, Frenchy, by Jove!" he ejaculated, upon seeing her.

"Monsieur, ze boy zat Mrs. Gruesome wrote for, he coam, sair," she panted.

"Yes, true—I know, by Jove! But come into the office, and give me the news, my faithful little servitor, and more gold will be yours."

She followed him into the office—a plain apartment near the front door—sat down near his desk, produced her book, and read off all she had written therein, with a charming foreign accent. The doctor listened eagerly until she was through.

"Then I must work fast," said he, after pondering a moment. "The boy is in the way, but can easily be disposed of for a time. Be in readiness to admit me in your house tonight after you hear the clock strike twelve."

"Monsiuer shall find me een readiness," replied the girl.

The madhouse owner arose, opened a bookcase filled with bottles and jars, all numbered and labeled, and filled a small vial. Handing it to the woman, he said, in deliberate tones:

"This must be the last dose. Give the woman only four drops in her food—no more—remember four drops. Six would kill her. You can give the boy two drops—two drops in his, at the same time."

Marie silently nodded, a look of indescribable sickness on her face, as she imagined the effect of what she was commissioned to do. Caleb Crane next drew a wallet from his pocket. Extracting fifty dollars, he handed it to the woman, and continued:

"And here, by Jove, is the medicine that will make the other effective. Now go, Frenchy, go and let my work be well done, my woman."

The woman then hurried out, and made her way to the gate, the doctor watching her from

the doorway with a cynical smile on his smooth-shaven face, and a queer look in his yellow eyes. Marie then returned to the cottage, and prepared supper for Ruric and his mother, being careful when all was ready to drop no more than the stipulated quantity of Dr. Crane's devilish mixture in the food for her victims. At seven o'clock the mother and son partook of the repast in the dining-room, and as Mrs. Gruesome complained of feeling unwell, she left the boy on the piazza to go to her room. Ruric was reading a book by the light that streamed out of the open parlor window, but within an hour he felt the effect of the subtle drug, and was drowsy as if chloroformed.

"Why," he muttered, in choking tones, as he arose and groped his way into the hall, "what—what ails—me? I—I feel—as if—I was strangling! My eyes—my eyes—they—they are bursting—and burning. How—strange—how—odd! C—c—can—I—I—b—b—be sick?"

He pressed his fevered hands to his throbbing temples and, reeling, he fell to the floor, at the foot of the stairs, unaware that Marie had darted out of the parlor, in which she had been sitting, watching him like a lynx, and bent over to pick him up.

"Eet ees ovairepwaair heem at last! Sacrel! Now, Monsieur Rureek, upstairs voez you, sair, an' to bed to bed!"

Just then there sounded a wild shriek in the upper part of the house, the thunderous beating of a chair against a door, and the voice of the boy's unfortunate mother, howling in frenzied accents:

"Mad! Mad! Mad! They have driven me to it at last! Ha! ha! ha! You have locked me in, you demon—you have locked me in—do you hear? I'll batter the door down if you do not liberate me. I'll smash it to fragments—fragments—fragments! Oh—ha! ha! ha! My brain is on fire! My veins are burning lava streams. I—oh, what is the matter? Why do I rave this way? This is strange!"

A low sob followed in plaintive accents, and the noise ceased. But those shrieking tones aroused the boy momentarily from his stupor.

"My mother!" he cried, wildly, as the voice seared in on his brain, and he bounded to his feet glaring at Marie. "She is sick!"

And with that he rushed upstairs. But he fell upon the upper landing again, overcome by the drug. A heartless, sibilant laugh peeled from the French woman's lips, as a low, wailing, moaning sound emanated from Mrs. Gruesome's room, and stooping over Ruric, whom she followed, she dragged him into the apartment next to his mother's. Several hours passed by, the boy lying like a log on the bed, his breath labored and stertorous, his fingers clutching at the covers, his swollen eyes half open, and his face fairly scarlet. During that time the woman in the next room was terribly affected, at one moment moaning, whining and sobbing, the next laughing boisterously, then flying into an intense fit of ungovernable fury. The clock in the boy's room was striking the hour of twelve, when a more violent paroxysm from the maddened woman aroused him partially, and he heard her shrieking and praying for help. Mechanically arising and seeing a door communicating with his

mother's room standing ajar, he crept over to it and peered in. What next happened to him seemed a dreadful nightmare. He imagined he saw his mother's room in a terrible state of disorder, the furniture smashed and overturned, tumbled about in wild confusion, and everything broken and spoiled. He pressed his hands at his temples, his eyes fairly bursting from his head, his face roasting hot, his breath fetid. Then there arose a vision before his eyes that seemed to be too terrible to be true, yet it certainly must have been; but he could not clearly see or think. nor could he utter a word. In the middle of the room was his mother, struggling with savage ferocity to get away from Dr. Caleb Crane, her eyes blazing like live coals, and her face distorted into a most fiendish expression of rage. The physician was swearing at her, and endeavoring to get a pair of handcuffs linked on her wrists behind her back. He tried to cry out, but his throat was dry, contracted and sore, his lips were parched with the fires of fever, and respiration was inadequate. When his vision returned, he looked in again. There knelt his mother on her knees, her manacled hands clasped together and upheld to Caleb Crane, tears streaming down her cheeks and the man holding a chair over her head, menacingly. Ruric saw the chair descend with a brutal crash, he heard a pitiful moan, he saw the stricken woman sink down, and he heard the physician cry, in hoarse tones:

"She is senseless! Marie—quick! Come here. Help me!"

Then a revulsion took place. Ruric's mind burst through the clouds of the drug, nature being strained to its highest tension, a hoarse cry burst from his lips, he bounded to his feet, and running, tripping, staggering and blindly groping his way, he passed through that dreadful room, out in the hall, and fell headlong down the stairs. But the shock only brightened his befogged intellect; he got up bruised and sore, rushed to the door and saw the woman and the doctor getting in a coach with his screaming, babbling mother, and then the vehicle rolled away. Maddened, nerved up, desperate, he rushed after it. Down the dusty road it sped, the boy in its wake, running as fast as he could go, until at last it reached the asylum gate. It passed through, and when he reached the gate he saw them carry his mother out and into the great, grim abode of horror. He beat at the closed iron gate, he shrieked aloud, and at last, utterly exhausted, he sank down upon the ground, insensible.

CHAPTER III.—A Strange Awakening.

The moment the dark portals of the madhouse closed behind the figures of Dr. Crane and Marie Montmedy, bearing in the figure of the screaming woman, who had recovered from the blow dealt her by the physician, they both looked intensely relieved. The madhouse keeper was met by several men in the hall, whom he employed about the establishment. A few words sent them away again, however, and the maddened woman was forcibly carried through the broad, echoing hall to the floor above, and then brought along a long corridor. A dozen iron-barred cells opened on either side, out of which glared a maniac in each

one, their fingers clutching the bars. Some shoved their claw-like hands out and tried to grasp the clothing of the girl, the woman, and the doctor, as they hurried by toward a larger room at the end of the passage. Passing inside, they saw a bed standing in one corner, the door was closed, and the maniac woman stood on her feet. She uttered a smothered cry, as soon as she was free, and groveling back against the wall, she crouched there furtively glaring at her captors, her face swollen and inflamed. The doctor laughed, and drew a paper from his pocket.

"Did you ever see medicine work better, Marie?" he asked.

"Eet ees wonderful, sair. Vun vould sink zat she be ze crazy womans, shure, sair, an' no meesteeck of zat."

"I want her to sign this paper, by Jove, and you to witness it."

Then he turned to the poor woman, who was idiotically driving, and in a coarse, brutal voice he exclaimed:

"Come here—you! D'you hear me! Come here!"

Whining and moaning the poor unfortunate crept up to him with a sacred look upon her red face, as he thrust the pen in her hand and said to her as he opened out the paper:

"Sit down in that chair and affix your name to this paper! You know what you are doing! Now if you don't obey me, I will give you such a beating you can't stand up!"

The woman only kept a fixed, vacant, stupid stare on his face, though, and his experience told him she was incapable. Dr. Caleb Crane was not to be swerved from his purpose, though. So he seized her hand in his own, held the pen between her fingers and traced her name at the bottom of the paper. Marie watched him intently.

"There," said he with a sigh when he finished, and pushed the woman off on the floor. "That is plain enough! Julia Gruesome. You saw her write it, and can swear to it, can't you, Frenchy? Of course you can, and, by jingo, it will pass as legal anywhere with the signatures of two witnesses. Now you sign it, too!"

He was careful, though, not to expose more of the paper to Marie's inquisitive gaze than the margin she was to sign. The poor woman was lying prone upon the floor, where Crane flung her, when Marie signed the paper.

"That will do," said the physician, pocketing it. "And now to shear and lock this thing up in a cell so she can do no damage, as I must keep her dosed constantly on that medicine, and keep her here all the rest of her life!"

He seized a pair of scissors from the table, and falling on his knees beside the prostrate woman, he rapidly cut off all her luxuriant dark hair close to the scalp. She did not say a word, nor offer the least resistance, and only moaned and moaned pitifully, until he suddenly seized her by the arms, and dragged her out into the hall toward a nearby cell, the door of which stood open. The cell had a spring lock, and he did not observe that it did not catch in the groove entirely, as he walked away. Returning to the other room he peered in and said:

"She is safe enough now, by Jove, Frenchy, so I'll leave you and retire, as I'm tired out fighting her. This is the room my dear departed wife used to occupy with me. It is noisy, my dear,

but if you can stand the racket the incurables make, you'll sleep all right. There's no danger of any of them getting out, and you'll be as safe here in this Bedlam as you would be on an island in mid-ocean, so good-night."

Marie was perfectly satisfied with her quarters, as she had no desire to return to the cottage that night. And pondering over the strange mystery enshrouding all these queer proceedings at the madhouse, she undressed herself and went to bed, where she soon fell asleep, forgetful of locking her door, she was so wrought up by the exciting events through which she had passed that night. Despite the wild cries of the incurables, she slept soundly. Too soundly, in fact! For, an hour later, her bedroom door was softly and cautiously pushed open, and Mrs. Gruesome's terrible face was thrust into the apartment and her glance fell on the sleeping Marie. Finding her cell-door open, she had stolen out, and Marie's room door being the first thing she saw, she had opened it. On the table the lamp stood dimly burning, and an evil look of cunning treachery stole over the crazed woman's face as she saw the box of matches standing there beside it. Like a shadow she glided up to the table, and picking up the matches she began to light them one by one, and flung them, burning, all over the bed. In a minute the bed-covers all caught aflame. Recoiling up against the door, the crazed woman seized the knob with one hand, and shook the other at Marie, hissing:

"I owe all my trouble to you, thrice accursed, and my revenge will be to see you roast to death while you sleep. Ha! ha! ha!"

And as her demoniacal laugh pealed out in sibilant inflections, she softly opened the door, passed out in the corridor, and gliding to the other end, she opened a door in a transverse hall. It was the doctor's sleeping apartment, and he was slumbering in bed, his clothing on a chair beside him. The woman glided up to his coat, took the paper he forced her to sign from his pocket, but the chair fell with a crash, arousing him. He jumped up, saw what happened, and rushed after the woman as she sped from the room with a loud laugh. Opening a window in the hall, she climbed out, and went down the vines growing against the face the building to the yard, before Crane could get anywhere near her, and with the paper in her possession, she vanished around the building in the yard.

When Ruric Gruesome recovered consciousness, he found himself lying in his bed at the cottage the next morning. All traces of any adventure he might have had the night before were now gone, for he looked as well as ever. Jumping up, he hastily drew on his pants.

"My mother! My poor, poor mother!" he moaned, as a look of unutterable woe crossed his face. "What has become of you? How came I here? Oh, heavens! Why did all that happen?"

"Ruric! Are you up yet, my boy?" interrupted a voice.

He started as if stricken a blow.

"Why, good heavens! that is my mother's voice!" he gasped. The door opened and a lady dressed in black, with her long, dark hair neatly done up on her head, entered the room.

"My mother!" he cried, hoarsely. "Alive! well! Oh, what does this mean?"

"Why, Ruric," said the lady, advancing with a sweet, gentle smile on her placid face, "what are you talking about? Are you sick?"

"Great heaven! are you a phantom? Am I sleeping yet?"

"Why, no, my son. I am over my little illness of last night. Marie has rung the breakfast bell, and Dan is waiting to drive us out afterward."

CHAPTER IV.—At the Stable.

In his bedroom, his mother standing before him, smiling, happy, and evidently no such maniac and sufferer as he thought he saw her the night before, Ruric Gruesome could hardly realize it was not some hideous dream and nightmare he passed through. He felt as if he would go mad puzzling to solve the strange problem. So he walked over to his mother, kissed her, and saw that she was alive, cheerful, uninjured, and not at all crazed. Ruric left the room with his mother, fearing he was getting crazy, and there was Marie in the dining-room, pert, dark, and so utterly indifferent that it seemed impossible she was as guilty as he imagined. After breakfast, Ruric and his mother got into the surrey and were driven around Irvingdale by the apparently simple-minded Dan. All points of interest were pointed out by Mrs. Gruesome, the boy taking in everything, but preserving considerable reticence, as his past experience was preying upon his mind. He told Mrs. Gruesome all he thought he witnessed. She laughed at it as a mere dream. On the way home again Ruric suddenly said:

"Dreams generally owe their origination to events, persons and places we have seen, the disordered imagination contorting those things, making the vividest impressions on our minds into grotesque ideas."

"Then," said his mother, "you see how you can account for yours."

"In what way do you mean, mother?"

"Didn't you meet Doctor Crane yesterday?"

"So I did. And you were sick last night, too."

"Then there are the links connecting your fancies while sleeping with the realism of natural order of things. But speaking of the doctor, I want to inform you that Dan made a huge mistake by saying I disliked him so heartily. He is my brother-in-law, you know, and consequently your uncle by marriage. Since Maud, my sister, died in France, and the doctor's return, he has been so assiduous in his attentions to me that I have finally concluded to—to—to—"

"To do what, mother?" asked Ruric anxiously.

"Well, Ruric, you know how your father ran away to sea, deserting me eleven years ago? Well, since then I found I needed a helpmeet in my life, and as Doctor Crane was so good and kind and yet gently persistent, and asked me to marry him, why I have consented."

"What!" cried Ruric, aghast. "You—marry—that—man, mother?"

"Such is my intention, my son; see—here is my engagement ring."

She showed a fine diamond gleaming on her finger. When they came in sight of the tree-embowered cottage, they saw the yellow-eyed

little doctor standing on the piazza, talking to Marie. But they could not, of course, hear what he was saying. It was, though, something to this effect:

"Marie, they are returning now, by Jove, and the boy looks well enough."

"Ah, doctair, here eez ze vial of ze drug I geef zem. Ze effect, eet vork away from ze boy like magic zees morning. How lucky zat ze mad voman geet loose, an' set my bed afire! Ma foi, eef, zen you not vould smell ze smoke, vake up, an' see hair entair your room, to steal ze papair vich she sign, from your pocket!"

"True—true, by Jove! But you would have roasted to death had I not got up to chase her; and after she got out the window I found your room ablaze. So I put out the smoking and fiery bed-covers, saving you from death, and you, lucky woman, would go away, and found Ruric at the gate. Of course, we knew then he must have followed our coach, and at once brought him home, still senseless, and put him to bed. Then you cleared your mistress' room, putting all traces of the broken furniture away, and making it look as if a howling maniac had not been in there, destroying everything by bringing in similar furniture. Ha! ha! ha!"

"But ze mad voman geet away viz ze papair, monsieur?"

"Yes, confound her," said the physician, with a dark frown. "But I will find it again as soon as I capture her."

Ruric and his mother, driving up just then, put an end to their conversation, and they all went into the parlor. The boy felt uneasy in the presence of the doctor and on a slight pretext he left the room, put on his hat, and went out. When Ruric reached the stable door he paused and peered in. A startling sight met his view. In an empty stall stood Dan in an attitude of utter dejection, great tears rolling down his clean-shaven cheeks, sobs breaking from his lips, and in his hand he clutched a yellow wig. His natural hair was jet black, and his appearance strangely altered.

"Hello, Dan! What does this mean?" cried the boy, jumping in.

The man started, a startled exclamation burst from his lips, he reeled back, and then he tried to replace the wig on his head ineffectually.

"Ruric!" he muttered, utterly aghast.

"Yes, Dan. But why under heaven are you wearing a wig? You don't need it, I am sure, unless it is to make you look ten years younger."

Dan's face had grown pale. It now turned very red. His confusion was increasing to a painful degree, too.

"Don't I?" he muttered, with a scared look.

"No. I see through it. You have disguised yourself for some purpose; that is very evident. You can't get out of it with excuses, so don't try to. Now, own up! What is your reason? I won't tell."

"Since you have found me out, I will confess to you. I am in disguise, Ruric, and I am prompted by a strange, but powerful motive. I know I can depend upon you to keep my secret. I am a friend to you, my boy, and heaven knows you will need one here, for a league of enemies are surrounding you."

"What do you mean by that, Dan?"

"Oh, I cannot explain myself at present. Let me give you this much information: Doctor Crane is a villain, and I am endeavoring to get certain information against him to cause his arrest."

"So—that's how it is, eh? I understand—you are a detective?"

"Well, perhaps I am, Ruric."

"Then I will keep your secret."

"I am sure you will."

"Did you hear the news, Dan?"

"News? What news?"

"My mother is engaged to be married to him."

"Oh, yes!" said the man, with a violent start.

"I heard it when I drove you and her out, just awhile ago, in the surrey. But I can safely predict that wedding will never take place, if I can prevent it by any means. Your mother is not sure that your father is dead yet, is she? You know that their eleven years' separation annuls their marriage, but still, as your father may be living for all she knows, she ought not get married again."

"Just what I think. You see, therefore, that your idea that she disliked the doctor was erroneous—wasn't it?"

"Oh, she always pretended to dislike him formerly; you can imagine I was surprised to learn that it was not only to the contrary, but that she is going to marry him."

He was about to turn away, when there sounded a frightful scream at the door behind him, and a maniacal voice crying:

"Listening! Listening at the door, eh? Ho! ho! ho! But I've got you!"

"Murdair! Let me go! Par dieu! You choke me!" shrieked another voice.

Dan and Ruric, startled, rushed to the door. There stood Marie, notebook in hand, caught in the act of taking down all Ruric and Dan's conversation, she having stealthily followed the boy from the house, and overheard all that passed in the barn. And the person who held her by the throat was the maniac woman, attired in Marie's dress, her hair cropped short, and a wild, crazed look on her distorted face as she pounced on the French girl. An asylum keeper had been pursuing her, and just then rushed in the yard. Ruric's glance fell upon her as the keeper caught her and dragged her away and out the gate, aided by Marie, and reeling back in a frenzy, he hoarsely cried:

Good heaven! It is my mother! It was no dream. She is a maniac!" and he fell in Dan's arms half-fainting from nervous shock.

CHAPTER V.—"I Am Godfrey Gruesome."

A few moments later Marie returned to the stable and found Ruric pale and troubled, leaning against Dan, near the door, just recovered. "Sacre!" she panted. "Eet vos von lunatics vot escape ze asylum."

Dan had not seen the crazy woman's face, but he darted toward Marie, caught her roughly by the arm, and exclaimed:

"Now you tell me if you weren't listening out here when she caught you."

"Leesten—me—out—here?" stammered Marie.

"Vy, no, sir, Meestair Dan."

"Do not lie! she said you did!"

"Zat ees ze great meesteck! I coam 'ere zat I tell Mastair Rureek to coam in ze house, hees mothair she weesh to speak viz heem."

"My mother!" wildly exclaimed the boy, glaring at the woman with distended eyes. "She was just here—here at the door—that poor, unfortunate lunatic. She is my mother. I knew I was right. I saw her last night as you and the doctor beat her and carried her away. I saw it all, I tell you."

His voice was piteous, and his actions full of despair.

"Coam viz me," said Marie, softly touching his arm. "You certainly are not ver' well, Mastair Rureek, to sink ze lunatics eez your mothair."

The boy flung her hand from his arm as if it stung him.

"Let go of me!" he exclaimed, hollowly. "I distrust you! There is something sly and diabolically deep about you! I hate you! I despise you! I loathe you!"

Scared at the terrible look he gave her, Marie retreated.

"I go een!" she panted. "I tell your mother you soon entair."

And so saying she sped away to apprise the doctor of all she overheard before the boy could get into the house. The doctor sat in the parlor alone when she entered. He looked nervous and excited to a high pitch. The moment Marie came in he bounded toward her, his smooth face twitching, his yellow eyes burning luridly, his long nose drawn down.

"That cry I just heard!" he cried hoarsely, as he seized Marie by the arm. "What—what was it? Speak! Did I rightly recognize that voice?"

"Eet vos ze womans vot escape," replied Marie, nodding.

"Ha! Then she is here?"

"Ze keepair pairsue an' breëng hair back."

"Did any one see her?"

"Ze boy."

"Worse and worse!"

"Still worse, monsieur. Leesten to zees."

And she read her report of all that passed between Ruric and Dan. Dr. Caleb Crane was a startled man when she finished.

"He a detective on my trail?" he groaned. "This is indeed a bad state of affairs. But it can easily be remedied, Frenchy. I must get him in my power and lock him up in the asylum. Oh, I am so glad the woman is recaptured. It relieves my mind."

Unfortunately for him, though, at that moment, on her way back to the asylum, the mad woman fell upon the keeper, overpowered him by her supernatural strength, felled him to the ground and got away again.

Mrs. Gruesome entered the room just then smiling and radiant.

"Well, Marie, have you told Ruric to come in so that I could inform him when my marriage with the doctor takes place?" she asked.

"Yais, ma'am," said the woman. "He soon coam een, but—"

"But what, Marie?" asked the woman, as Marie hesitated.

"Madame, I fear me zat ze boy ees affected een ze brain," said she.

Before any reply could be made to this per-

tinent observation the door was thrust open and Ruric rushed into the room, crying excitedly:

"I will convince myself! I will convince myself that the face of that maniac was not my mother's—that I am not haunted by a strange vision—that I am not a veritable maniac!"

His startled gaze fell upon Mrs. Gruesome.

"My mother!" he fairly shrieked, as he held out his arms.

"Ruric! My son!" cried Mrs. Gruesome in startled tones.

The trembling boy covered his eyes with his hands.

"The vision of last night is gone—the reality remains here!" the boy continued, looking up, a bright spot glowing on either cheek, "and yet they said she was mad. I saw her frenzied. But she is not crazy at all. For here she is natural, sane and well."

"Ruric," said Mrs. Gruesome in strained tones, "my poor boy, have you had another of those dreadful hallucinations?"

He paused, shook his head mournfully, and said:

"Yes, they will haunt me forever, mother."

"You must let the doctor hear about this, Ruric, and as it is his branch of the profession, he may be able to help you."

"He? Dr. Crane? Never!"

"Why do you speak this way, Ruric?" queried Mrs. Gruesome.

"Oh, mother, I do not know," replied the boy, despairingly.

"Poor boy, poor boy!" sighed the doctor sympathetically. "I do not know what ails him, Julia, but judging from what I hear I should say he is possessed of a certain morbid mania—an optical delusion, owing to a peculiar tumorous formation growing on the brain, which may be easily eradicated—"

"I have not," emphatically interposed Ruric. "Do not delude yourself about me. I am as sane as you are, sir."

At this moment the door opened again and Dan walked in. He swept a keen, piercing glance around the room and saw Marie and the physician start with trepidation, draw closer to each other, and Ruric and Mrs. Gruesome glanced around.

"Dan!" ejaculated the lady. "What do you want here?"

"Mrs. Gruesome, I must have a word with you."

"Ah! How oddly altered your voice is!"

"Yes. Further concealment, I have concluded, is useless!"

"What do you mean, sir? Have you taken leave of your senses?" demanded Mrs. Gruesome in surprised tones.

"Not at all," was the cool rejoinder. "I must speak to you privately before Doctor Crane leaves this house, madam."

"Speak!" cried the lady in exasperation. "Speak, or leave this room!"

She drew herself up proudly and pointed at the door. The man smiled nonchalantly and replied in cool tones:

"Very well. As you like. I have offered you the last chance. Now, then, for my communication. I wanted simply to warn you not to marry Caleb Crane, that is all."

"You—advise—me? Dan, you are my hireling—do you forget it?"

"Do not force me to go to extremes, madam."

"Extremes—my servant—my man-of-all-work! Ha! ha! ha! Extremes!"

"I can make a startling revelation—one that will crush you—if you drive me to desperation!" hissed Dan, angrily.

"Your boast mystifies me. I defy you, sir!"

"Then, so be it. Say—do you know me? Look well upon my features, Julia Gruesome, and tell me, do you know me?"

He tore off his wig and stood exposed before her. There was a deathly silence in the room. Mrs. Gruesome glanced fixedly at the man.

"No," said she; "I see you were disguised, but I don't know you."

"Then shall I have to tell you who I am?"

"It is a matter of utter indifference to me," said the woman with a shrug of her shoulders. "I care not who you are."

"Eleven years ago, then, you parted with your husband in anger, and he went to sea. You imagined he was dead. But he lived, following his nautical life. He has returned to you. I am Godfrey Gruesome!"

A simultaneous cry of amazement burst from them all, and Mrs. Gruesome gasped, in horrified tones:

"What! You Godfrey—you, my husband?"

"I am, and I swear you shall not marry that man!"

A groan escaped Mrs. Gruesome's lips, and she fell fainting to the floor. Ruric sprang to her side, and as Godfrey Gruesome started toward her, the doctor poured the contents of a vial on his handkerchief, clapped it to the man's nostrils, and uttering a groan, Godfrey Gruesome fell beside his son, overcome by the subtle drug, in the doctor's power.

CHAPTER VI—The Apparition of His Mother.

Ruric sprang to his feet and glanced at the recumbent form of his father in amazement, the strange odor of chloroform assailing his nostrils in a most disagreeable way, but the doctor pocketed his handkerchief. Marie had run to her mistress's side, and Caleb Crane stood close to the boy with a most innocent look upon his face.

"Bless fy soul," said he, in hypocritical tones of surprise. "The man has fainted. He was dreadfully excited, and it has overwhelmed him. Of course, he was lying—he must be an impostor, Ruric."

"He an impostor?" cried the boy. "I doubt it. But I will soon see. My mother told me she had a photograph of him in her room, in an album, and I will get it to see if he told the truth."

Ruric darted out of the room and ran upstairs.

"Monsieur," said the French woman, looking up.

"Well, Frenchy?"

"Ze mad womans, she destroy the album an' all ze pictures, sair."

"So much the better, my dear; so much the better. The boy can now prove nothing. Yet, had we had a picture of Godfrey Gruesome, there might have been a good deal of trouble avoided. Did you see it?"

"I deed, monsieur, and zees man ees Godfrey Gruesome!"

"Just see how the disclosure has affected my affianced. She feared he would prevent our marriage, and has fainted dead away."

"Parbleu! Zees ees ze day unlucky for us."

"On the contrary, it is a very lucky day, Frenchy for look there!"

He pointed out the window, and Marie saw two of his keepers passing along the road, going toward the asylum.

"We will get this fellow to the asylum," continued the doctor, with a grim smile. "They will carry him away before the boy comes down, and once he is locked up in one of the cells, it will be an easy matter for me to carry out my plan of marrying the senseless lady, my Jove!"

They grasped Godfrey Gruesome, dragged him outside and called the men. They were given their orders, and hurried away with the drugged man. Re-entering the house, the two plotters returned to the parlor, and Marie set about to restore the lady to consciousness. A few moments later Ruric came downstairs, looking disappointed.

"I cannot find the picture," announced he, in disgusted tones.

"Well, bless me, it is needless," blandly said the doctor, for he recovered just now, and, declaring it was all a jest, he ran away. For my part, with all my experience with madmen, I am willing to swear to that individual's lunacy, as his words and actions were unmistakable. As he has run away you have proof enough of the foul lies he uttered."

Ruric was amazed at this cool announcement. He had been expecting great things, but was disappointed. His mother failing to identify the man made him suspect "Dan's" truth.

The wedding was fixed for a week later, to be held in the handsome Episcopal church on the outskirts of Irvingdale, and all the elite of the place was invited to attend the ceremony. Mrs. Gruesome had ordered her wedding trousseau in New York, and on Friday morning, the day before the ceremony, she left the cottage, escorted by the doctor as far as the depot in his carriage, to go to the city to make her last few purchases, promising Ruric she would be home late that night. Marie, too, had gone with her.

Ruric had his meals at a restaurant, and when night fell, he went home, and retiring to his room, laid down to think, on his bed. But before he knew it, he fell fast asleep. How long he remained wrapped in slumber was a mystery, but he was finally awakened by a terrible sense of suffocation, and by feeling some one shaking his arm most violently. Half asleep for the moment, he started bolt-upright. The room was cast in darkness save for a streak of moonlight that streamed in through one of the open windows.

"Ruric! Ruric! Get up! Get up! The house is afire—the house is afire!"

It was his mother's well-known voice, and it was followed by a most infernal peal of laughter that struck a cold chill to the boy's heart. He sprang from the bed. The room was filled with blinding smoke! But through the mist he saw the same wild creature with his mother's face whom he met that week at the stable door, holding onto Marie! She stood gesticulating on the arbor outside of his window, to where she hurried the moment she aroused him, and he sprang toward her, crying:

"Mother! Mother!"

But the next moment she vanished. Whether she dropped through the dense foliage of the grapevines, or melted into thin air, the boy had no idea; but the fact remained that she was gone.

The first person Ruric encountered were his mother and Marie. But she did not appear to be like the mad creature he just saw on the grape arbor, and a cold chill of horror shot through him.

His mother was stylishly attired, and claimed to have just returned from the city with Marie; indeed they both carried bundles in their hands. Mrs. Gruesome was weeping at the loss of the cottage, and begged Ruric to hurry over to the asylum to summon the doctor, whose advice she wanted to ask in her trouble.

He had traversed but half the distance to the great graystone edifice, thinking that now his mother was going to marry the doctor they would have to live in the abode of horrors, when he was startled by hearing a crashing in the bushes lining the road on the left-hand side. A man's voice—and it was the doctor's too—reached his ears.

"You won't, eh?" he was shouting from amid the bushes. "But I say you will! You stole the paper from my pocket, and I am going to have it back from you if I have to kill you to get it!"

Into the bushes Ruric crept, trembling lest his worst fears should prove true, his heart fairly in his mouth, and his hair bristling on his head. He parted the bushes and glanced through. A small, circular glen was before him. In the middle stood the doctor, and on the ground the same wild woman with his mother's face, her form and her voice.

"Can she be in two places at once?" he groaned, in agonized tones.

The doctor gave the screaming woman a brutal kick.

"I've got you, and you'll go back to the asylum, since you escaped the keeper today!" he shouted, furiously, as the woman rolled over.

But cut, bruised bleeding and agonized as the poor creature was, she laughed jeeringly, suddenly bounded to her feet pushed the doctor over, sprang into the dense bushes, and vanished in a twinkling. Ruric rushed into the glen as the physician rose.

"Doctor Crane!" he gasped, wildly. "Tell me—I implore you—I beseech you, was that woman my mother? Was she—was she? Speak!"

Amazed at his sudden and unexpected presence there, the doctor gasped and stared at him in speechless confusion a moment. Then he pulled his wits together by an effort, and gasped:

"Your mother? Why no. She is nothing like your mother!"

"Our house was set on fire—is burning now, and my mother sent me—"

"Your mother sent you from the village? Then how can you say the mad old woman without any hair, who escaped from my asylum is her? You see, you must be as mad as a March hare!" "It is either that, or I am a haunted boy!" gasped Ruric.

Mrs. Gruesome, and Marie, and Ruric then went to the asylum, as it was decided that they were to live there after the wedding, and while the authorities looked for the firebug the fire engine extinguished the flames. Rooms were assigned

them in the asylum, and men went out to hunt for the woman who had been haunting Ruric.

The next day, at three o'clock in the afternoon, the church was filled with the invited guests, and the doctor and his bride appeared. Ruric and Marie were seated amid the guests. It was to be a grand, showy wedding as the doctor was thought to be rich, and all the wealthiest residents of Irvingdale were present.

The great organ ceased playing when the nuptial pair reached the railing and knelt down, and the ceremony commenced. But hardly was the service half finished, when there sounded a wild, piercing shriek that rang through the sacred edifice thrilling every one.

And the next instant down the center aisle dashed the mad woman. Ruric bounded from his pew and made a rush at the woman.

"My mother! My mother!" he cried, in sobbing tones.

The doctor's face had turned as pale as death. Like a madman he left his startled bride, and ran for the woman the same moment Ruric did. They both caught hold of her at the same time.

"I will find out the truth now!" panted the boy.

The mad woman, shouting and struggling in the meantime, was endeavoring to get away from them, but they both clung to her with a strength that could not be overcome.

CHAPTER VII.—Mr. Benjamin H. Bings.

The wedding guests in the Episcopal church were cast in an uproar of excitement to see the mad woman rush in so unexpectedly and interrupt the half-finished ceremony.

It was a singular situation, and as Ruric held onto his mother, and the doctor did likewise, the struggling woman flung up her arms and violently threw them aside, wrenching herself free by a terrific effort of her strength. Then she made a dash for the door, uttering her unearthly laugh that sent a chill of horror through every one in the church, as they watched her strange figure disappearing.

"She transforms her appearance like a magician!" muttered Ruric, wildly. "She is possessed of mysterious powers of supernatural kinds to make two distinct beings of herself—to have two natures—to be in two places at the same time to—Ha! I thought so!"

He had looked back at the altar, and saw that the woman—his mother—the bride—had vanished; but he did not know that Marie had conveyed her to the vestry-room, while he was looking after the mad woman.

"The bride of a moment ago is gone!" he muttered, in horror-struck tones, "and the wild monstrosity I struggled with is her other self, fled to the door! Am I not haunted—is it reasonable to think I am a fool? Oh, my life here is a burden to me—a burden! How happy I was at school! But—ah, there goes the doctor!"

Caleb Crane felt uncomfortable at finding himself the cynosure of all eyes, standing with the boy in the middle aisle, and wondering whether the face of the lunatic had been observed by any one save Ruric, he hurried into the vestry-room to join Marie and his bride. Left alone, and

seeing the minister follow the doctor, and every one rising as if to depart, Ruric put on his hat and left the church intensely excited.

Ruric went back to the asylum. He went into the doctor's office, and sat down to await Caleb Crane's return from the church, a grim resolve in his mind to have an understanding with the wily physician. Sitting in a chair near the window, he became so absorbed in thought that he did not notice the entrance of a stranger until he was suddenly startled by hearing an insinuating:

"Ahem—ahem!"

With a violent start, Ruric looked up. Before him stood a tall, thin individual, as straight as an arrow, very narrow of chest, wearing a stove-pipe hat of extraordinary height, a high-standing collar, a black cravat, a long, black Prince Albert coat, and a pair of excessively tight pants, that made his great big feet look much larger than they really were. He wore a pair of black cotton gloves, carried an umbrella, and had a cadaverous face, a long sharp nose, hollow eyes and a fringe of whiskers of a yellow color and sparse settlement, his upper lip being shaved clean.

"Ah!" exclaimed Ruric, suddenly, arising as this singular apparition appeared before his vision. "Good-afternoon, sir. I suppose you want the doctor?"

"Young man," said the stranger, in solemn tones, and without relaxing the rigidity of his elongated countenance, "the aforesaid remark applies, as hereinafter will be demonstrated. Sit down! Ahem! Sit down!"

"A lawyer, by jingo!" was Ruric's mental comment as he complied.

He eyed the solemn stranger speculatively an instant, and said abruptly:

"The same to you, sir. Sit down yourself."

The lanky, black-clothed, straight-laced stranger complied, with a sigh.

"Judging by appearances, which is sometimes a great mistake, I may venture to announce it as my belief, pace tua, that you are domiciled here?"

"Yes," assented Ruric, "I live here. The doctor is my—my stepfather now."

"Indeed! Then, as a sequence, you heretofore figured as the offspring of a lady known and acknowledged in due form as the spouse of one Godfrey Gruesome, a person of nautical suasion, who was wrecked at sea?"

"My mother's name was Gruesome."

"Exactly so—exactly so; and before her marriage, Julia Forrester—eh?"

"Yes; but why do you ask—how do you know?"

"My Christian youth, it behooves me to explain facts hereinafter to appear according to judicial form. The worthy physician and I have been in correspondence arising, as the Latin says, *auri sacra fames*. He has married your respected mother, and as the aforesaid case relates to the party of the second part of the contract; in other words, the doctor becomes the one to treat of the hereinafter-to-be-mentioned case."

"Do you mean to say my mother is involved in a legal case?"

"Precisely so, my discerning young friend. In short, she has suddenly fallen heiress to an immense fortune, and I your humble servant, as the legal administrator of the deceased testator's ef-

fects, am retained to arrange the settlement of affairs, and make you all happy."

"Who is it that died and left my mother this fortune, sir?"

"Mr. James Forrester, the only living relative your mother had, my fortunate youth, his wife having passed away a week ago, and the fortune, amounting to over one million, has been willed to your mother and to—"

But just then the door was flung open with a crash, and before the rusty legal light could say "you," in rushed the doctor, interrupting him. Up rose the stiff figure of Benjamin H. Bings, out shot his hand, and with the grip of two fraternal beings they shook hands. The doctor was alone, and had heard what the lawyer was saying to Ruric, and he congratulated himself that he had just arrived in time to prevent a disclosure of what he wanted kept an inviolable secret.

CHAPTER VIII.—Ruric Finds His Father.

After greeting the lawyer and enjoining him by a gesture to be careful of what he said before Ruric, the physician turned to the boy, and said, in concise tones:

"Your mother lies ill up in her room from the shock on her nerves produced by the advent of that lunatic in the church, and wants you to go up and see her, Ruric."

Ruric shuddered and clasped his temples with his hands as he hurried toward the door, for the boy was prone to imagine that his own mind was affected somehow. As soon as the doctor heard him ascending the stairs, he closed the door and turned to his caller, who sat in a chair by the desk as immovable as a statue, with:

"Pon my word, Mr. Bings, the boy is a queer fellow—a very odd chap, indeed. But he's gone now, so by your leave we will talk of the occasion of your call."

"As hereinafter will appear, my worthy doctor, James Forrester, died two days ago," solemnly said Mr. Bings, "and relenting entirely toward his recreant daughter in the end, he has made her and her son heirs to his immense fortune."

"Ah! The boy, too, is named in the will, eh?"

"Precisely so. The fortune aforesaid amounts to one million and a fraction, which said fraction may be left unmentioned, from the fact of its being about what will recompense Mr. Benjamin H. Bings for his legal functions in the matter; and one-third is named for the boy, two-thirds for his mother."

"I presume you have got the will?"

"My dear and worthy sir," replied the barrister, with a wave of his gloved hand, "that important document has been duly filed with the surrogate in forma propia, and there you may see it any time."

"Oh, yes, I see!" said the doctor

"In behalf of your—ahem—your wife, my delectable sir," proceeded the skinny man, with a spasmodic cough behind his bony hand, "I may venture to surmise that you will make an effort, through the instrumentality of your humble servant to lay claim to the aforesaid fortune. In point of fact, when you favored Benjamin H. Bings with a visit some days ago, at his sanctum sanctorum, you intimated that such a proceeding would inevitably ensue."

"True," assented the doctor, with a cagy look in his yellow eyes, "but are there any specifications in regard to the administration of Ruric Gruesome's share of this money in the will?"

"As in hereinafter to be shown," said the lawyer stiffly, "it will become manifest that the daughter of deceased—the aforementioned Julia Gruesome, nee Forrester—shall be the aforesaid guardian."

When Bings had gone, the doctor vented a sigh of relief and the door opening, Marie came in from the adjoining room. She had her notebook and pencil in her hand, having been assiduously at work jotting down the dialogue in phonography for the physician's benefit, unknown to him.

"Well, Frenchy," he said, taking a seat, "what news?"

"Ze boy, monsieur, go to madam's room," said the woman.

"As I ordered him to do. And then?"

"He tell hair all about ze mad vomans."

"At which she scoffed, of course—eh?"

"Sertainly, sair. Zen—vot you sink 'appen, par bieu!"

"Heaven only knows, Marie. What was it?"

"Rureek nearly find hair to be——"

"What?" shouted the doctor, in a sudden fit of alarm.

"E ask hair to write von leetle note for heem to ze school, to zank ze professair for being so kind to heem an' she not know vot zat she say, until at last she tell heem zat she deed 'urt hair hand an' cannot write."

Another sigh of intense relief burst from the doctor's lips.

"Bless her heart! How cute, to be sure!" he gasped feverishly. "Did you hear what I said to the lawyer, Frenchy?"

"Yais, monsieur. Eet I 'ave all written een ze book 'ere."

"Then you know that I must secure that lunatic and get the paper back which I forced her to sign."

"Yais, monsieur."

"If it was not for your fear of perjury I would have signed Julia Gruesome's name to it myself, forging it as cleverly as she could write it. But no—you would not do it, so I had to trace her name with my own hands, to overcome your scruples, so you could, with a clear conscience, swear you saw her affix her name to the paper."

"Monsieur," sweetly said Marie, "I know I be ver' bad vomans to do all I deed do for gold; yet all I do can be remedied; but to once take ze false oath to von forgery you cannot recall."

"The deuce take your nicety of conscience!" growled the doctor savagely. "But never mind, I'll get the paper back by capturing the woman, and then send it to Bings, so as to get control of the legacy—do you see? Ha! What is that?"

The noise of voices in the hall and a wild howl were heard. He ran out, and there stood two keepers with the mad woman, whom they had captured. At the same moment there sounded a furious uproar upstairs. The doctor rushed away in alarm, mounting the stairs three at a jump. In the hall on which the lunatics were confined, he saw Ruric striving to open one of the cells, the madmen all around creating the furious disturbance he heard. A cry of dismay burst involuntarily from the doctor's lips. For the cell contained Ruric's father—Godfrey Gruesome.

CHAPTER IX.—Down in the Dungeon.

Having left his mother sitting in the elegantly furnished apartment the doctor had brought her to, Ruric had gone out in the corridor on which the cells opened, and heard someone call him. It was his father, manacled hand and foot, in a cell.

"Good heavens!" groaned the boy. "The doctor lied to me. He did not run away from the cottage, a jesting impostor, but was sent here and confined! My mother is Crane's victim! She has committed bigamy by marrying the scoundrel!"

"Ruric!" cried the prisoner frantically. "My son! By all you hold sacred and dear, get me out of here! Caleb Crane did this. He wants to get me out of his way to perpetrate some rascality. In the midst of these madmen my brain will turn. Save me! Save me!"

"You are really my father, then?" panted the boy.

"I call Heaven to witness that I am!"

"I believe you. Yet my mother denied it—she did not recognize you."

"Open the door, Ruric. Let me out of here. And once I get my hands on the throat of that infamous reptile, Caleb Crane, I will wring a confession of the motive that actuates him from his villainous lips, if I perish doing it."

He clutched a bar of his cell in a frenzy, and violently shook it, making his manacles clank with a dismal sound. Ruric's heart bled for the unhappy man, and he was endeavoring to get the cell door open when the doctor rushed up, pounced on him, caught him by the neck, and with one fling sent him reeling across the corridor, away from the door.

"Clear out of here! Clear out!" he shouted furiously.

"You liberate my father, you scoundrel!" cried the boy.

"Your father? Are you mad?"

"No, Caleb Crane, not as mad as you often intimate I am!"

The doctor savagely glared at him. Just then Ruric beheld his father behind the doctor's back, making warning gestures to him; and apprehending at once what was implied he was suddenly struck with an idea.

"He wants me to keep still!" thought the boy. "It is a good plan. The doctor is sly and I must be cunning to outwit him. I'll throw him off his guard, and when I have a favorable opportunity I'll come back and liberate my father!"

The boy walked away, while Crane called a keeper.

"Watch that boy till he's in the room with his mother, then lock him in," said the physician. "The key is on the outside of the door. Then take No. 14 to cell No. 7 in the cellar. I am going downstairs to have the woman taken down. Warn all hands not to let the boy know where the man has gone, and that the woman has been recaptured. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir," replied the keeper.

The doctor then went down to the floor below, and the keeper obeyed his injunctions to the letter, making a prisoner of Ruric in his mother's room, and conveying Godfrey Gruesome down into a dark dungeon by a back staircase. Upon reaching the lower floor, the doctor encountered the two keepers, who had captured the woman down

by the river. The unfortunate woman was screaming and raving, and crouching back against the wall, in the clutches of the rough, burly men. The moment her glance fell upon the doctor, a terrible fit of fury assailed her, and she strove with superhuman strength to break away from her captors and get at him.

"Don't let her get away, boys," grimly said the doctor. "Search her. She has a paper that is very valuable to me, and I must get it at any hazard. Tear every rag off her body, if necessary."

"No, no, no!" cried the woman, quivering with excitement, as she wrestled in the strong grasp of her captors. "You cannot get it! You cannot get it! Ha! ha! ha! I have balked your design, Caleb Crane! I have thwarted your plans, you fiend in human form! It is hidden—safely, safely hidden. Do you hear me? Ho! ho! ho! Hidden, hidden, hidden, safely—well—where you can never, never get it. Ho! ho! ho!"

"Confound her, she has balked me!" hoarsely muttered Crane, "but I shall wring an avowal of the truth from her lips, if I have to torture her to death in order to find it. Away with her—down in the dungeon with her—take her to No. 4, and by heavens I shall force a confession of the paper's hiding-place from her!"

Hardened and brutal as the keepers were, they glanced at each other and shuddered at mention of taking the poor woman down to that cell, for they knew what that meant! They were dragging her, screaming, away, when there came a ring at the door-bell, accelerating their movements, and causing a dark frown to appear on Caleb Crane's brow. He was obliged to forego accompanying them, and as they disappeared down a gloomy flight of stairs with her, the door-keeper admitted a man to see the physician about taking a patient. Caleb Crane's institution was a private asylum, and he did an excellent business there since he started the madhouse. Having rid himself of his caller, he was about to go down to the dungeon, when a furious ring at a bell in the office summoned him upstairs to his wife's apartments. He hastily answered the call, softly unlocking the door on the outside, and pocketing the key.

"Why, Caleb," said his bride, in surprised tones, "what ailed the door? I tried to open it and it seemed to have been locked."

"Pooh, pooh, my dear," blandly said Crane. "It was stuck in the jam. I must have a carpenter fix it today. It opened rather hard just now, I noticed. Did you want to come out?"

"No, Caleb, but Ruric here wished to go out," she replied.

She was a sweet and gentle-looking woman, and seemed to entertain the most profound affection for the boy. Ruric smiled when the doctor entered, and then said:

"Doctor, as you are now my stepfather, will you please write to my old professors for me, saying you and my mother are satisfied with what they have done for me. It is most singular about you, mother. You tried to write the letter for me, as you were always an elegant writer, but I declare your chirography was strangely changed; you inscribed the letters terribly, the spelling was awful and at last you gave it up in despair. Of course, if you hurt your hand as you said, you cannot do as I asked."

Mrs. Crane looked at her husband, and he glanced at her in a peculiar manner, which the boy did not observe. The doctor readily consented, though, and after the letter was written, the boy took it, saying he was going to the village to post it, and left the room and descended the stairs. When he got down in the lower hall he paused near the door of one of the keepers' rooms, his attention being arrested by what he heard two of the men saying inside the apartment.

"Yair, Bill, I caught her down by ther river terday, an' Jim an' me brung her in here, an' tuck her down in ther dungeons."

"Why, Hank, that's where the doc told me to take the feller who the boy was trying to get out of his cell. He's in No. 7. The old feller don't want the boy to know anything about it, neither."

"And I brung ther woman to No. 4."

"Oh, ho! The torture cell, eh?"

"Why," muttered Ruric, in amazement, "they have caught the unfortunate being I believed to be my mother, and have put her down in the cellar. Fortune favors me. And my poor father is down there, too! Now is my chance! I'll slip down there and liberate my father. Then we can get the woman out, and if she is my mother—but, pshaw! how can she be? I just left my mother up in her room, smiling and happy."

He hurried through the hall, and taking a candle from a rack with some matches, he went down to the vaults. A broad flight of stairs led to the cellars, and an arched passage, damp, cold, and reeking with filth and vermin, met his view. There were a dozen iron-barred cells opening on this passage, and by the aid of his candle he located No. 7.

"Father!" he cried, running to the door.

"Oh—Ruric! Thank heaven! Is it you, my boy?" cried the man in the cell, as he rushed to the door and peered out through the bars.

"Ay! And I am here to release you!" cried the boy.

The door was bolted on the outside and he opened it. Godfrey Gruesome stepped out in the corridor, and Ruric rushed off to the cell numbered four, held up his candle and peered in. There crouched the mad woman he sought, her back turned toward him, muttering incoherently to herself in low tones.

"Ruric! Ruric!" cried the man, in startled tones.

"What is it?" demanded the boy, in alarm.

The woman turned around just then and glared at him ferociously. He was startled frightfully, for it was his mother's face he saw!

"Fly!" thrillingly cried his father, in smothered, frantic tones. "Look there!"

"The doctor and two keepers approaching with a lantern!" gasped the boy.

"He may kill you for venturing to do this!" muttered his father.

Ruric hastily extinguished his candle and glided over to his father's side, watching the approaching light and men in alarm. He hardly dared guess what his fate would be if they caught him there liberating his father from the dungeon.

CHAPTER X.—Cell No. 4.

Cell No. 4, down in the madhouse dungeon, wherein the crazed veteran crouched whom Ruric

saw by the light of his candle before he extinguished it, was a torture-chamber! The boy did not know it positively, but surmised that there was something wrong about it from what he heard the two keepers saying in the doctor's office. He had the letter clutched in his hand which the doctor had written to his old professors at Albany, as he joined his father in the dark corridor outside of cell No. 7, to where Godfrey Gruesome stepped when Ruric unlocked his cell door. The man was manacled hand and foot, though. They watched the lantern carried by the doctor, as Crane approached with the two keepers, and saw that Ruric could not escape by retracting his steps, for they were at the entrance to the damp, dirty and gloomy corridor just then. Crane might injure the boy if he discovered him liberating his father, and what to do the boy did not know for a moment: to remain inactive, though, meant exposure! But he had no time to speculate over this just then, for the doctor and his assistants were dangerously near, and their grim looks showed that they were bent upon forcing the woman to confess where she had hidden the paper, which she signed for the benefit of Benjamin H. Bings, the solemn-visaged lawyer.

"Into the cell—quick! Come with me!" gasped his father. "It is your only means of concealment!"

He caught the boy by the wrist, and pushing him through the open door, he glided in himself and drew the door shut. And he was just in time, too! The next instant the doctor and the two keepers reached the cell, and came to a pause in front of it, holding up the dull-glowing lantern, so that its rays fell upon the iron bars. There was a wretched iron cot in the cell. The moment Ruric got in he lightly got on to it and drew the covers over his body, concealing himself. Godfrey Gruesome remained at the door. He clutched the bars with his manacled hands, and glared out at the newcomers in a baleful manner.

"Ah!" said the doctor, upon catching sight of him. "You are there, are you, my boy? I hope you are pleased with your quarters."

"Rascal!" exclaimed the man, grating his teeth. "You shall not keep me confined here long."

"By Jiminy!" suddenly interrupted one of the keepers, in startled tones, as he pointed at Gruesome's cell, "looker there."

The prisoner started, and his face blanched.

"The door is unlocked, by Jove!" gasped the doctor.

Godfrey Gruesome's heart sank like lead in his bosom.

"Our plan is frustrated!" he muttered.

He was just about to fling the iron door open, spring out and attack them, in a mad hope of getting away. But before he could accomplish his design, the other keeper sprang forward, and "click" went the bolt. The door was securely locked. Ruric was made a prisoner with his father. The doctor's yellow eyes snapped and sparkled, and a jeering laugh pealed from his lips, as he cried:

"Defeated, Godfrey Gruesome! You cannot escape me now!"

"You villain! Then at last you acknowledge I am Godfrey Gruesome?"

"Oh, yes! You can do me no harm by knowing the truth. Marie Montmedy saw your photograph in your wife's bed-chamber at her cottage once,

and acknowledged to me that you were the original of the picture, when you threw off your disguise as 'Dan,' the hired man," said Crane.

Godfrey Gruesome kicked the cot to call Ruric's attention. But the boy had overheard every word, and a thrill shot through him as he realized that it was now proven beyond a doubt that the man was really his father.

"And knowing this," proceeded the prisoner gloomily, "you had the audacity to make an effort to marry my wife!"

"True. In fact, she is now my wife, by Jove!"

"Your wife?"

"We were married today."

"What! Oh, but it was bigamy."

"Not at all!" interrupted the doctor blandly.

"In eleven years you have neither lived with her nor supported her, and less time than that is requisite to annul your marriage in this State. Hence, she was free to marry whom she chose."

Godfrey Gruesome uttered a groan, for he knew that this was true, and Ruric felt a deep sense of relief creep over him to learn that his mother had not criminated herself in any way by marrying the doctor. The doctor then walked away without uttering another word, and crossing the corridor to No. 44, Gruesome saw him, Bill and Hank open the door and pass inside. The only light to be seen now was what rays streamed out on the corridor between the iron bars of the cell door. Ruric arose and, throwing off the covers from the cot, he went to the door and joined his father. He was just about to whisper something when Godfrey Gruesome made a warning gesture, and pointed out into the gloomy corridor before the cell.

Ruric glanced out and was startled to see Marie glide into view, her figure looking dim and shadowy in the gloom. She held her notebook and pencil in her hand, and as she crouched silently down in front of Gruesome's cell, they saw that she was intent upon taking down all she heard said, in shorthand. The doctor and his assistant were in a gloomy vault, made of large blocks of stone, in which some rings of rusty iron were welded in the left-hand wall and in back. There was an iron cot at the extremity, and the mad woman had thrown herself upon it, when they came in in a paroxysm of fear and fury. But she was not as violent as she had been, for in the lapse of the week, since which Marie had given her the doctor's terrible concoction of chloral hydrate, cocculus, atropa, belladonna, and dhatoora, the effect began to wear off. Indeed, the French woman before that had systematically been dosing her with different ingredients of the drug for a long time past, and when the final decoction was administered it served to achieve the climax the doctor had been preparing her for. With the wearing away of the powerful drug's effect the woman's reason gradually began to return, and the faculties which had been shattered resumed their functions. This was a result the doctor was aiming at. The poor creature recognized him with a shudder as he entered, and the diabolical expression on his face told her that he contemplated mischief toward her. The two keepers stationed themselves near the closed door, with a lantern, and the doctor walked on to her side.

"Do you recognize me?" he demanded roughly.

"Yes," came the trembling reply, "you are Doc-

tor Crane. Ho! ho! ho!" she added, with a sudden burst of lunacy. "I know you."

Then she crouched back against the cot again in a fit of trembling. He glanced at her furtively an instant, and then added:

"Where is the paper you signed which you stole from me?"

"I don't know," she replied. "I don't know—I don't know."

"You lie!" exclaimed Crane angrily. "You lie! Tell me where you have hidden it, or, by heavens, I'll force you to!"

She began to laugh and cry alternately, meantime protesting with one breath that she did not know where she put the paper, and with the next defying him and saying that he would never force her to tell. It was a heart-rending sight, but the men were used to it. Springing upon her with bristly ferocity, the little doctor caught her by the throat as she was arising, and bore her over upon her back on the flagstones.

"Now tell me, tell me!" he yelled. "I will have no nonsense from you. Do you hear, tell me, or——"

"Mercy! Mercy!" she shrieked. "Oh, heaven! This is terrible!"

"Will you confess?" hissed the doctor sardonically.

"Oh, I do not know where I put it!" she wailed.

The doctor was furious, but relentless.

"Then, by Jove, she shall sign another!" he exclaimed hoarsely.

"Anything! Anything!" groaned the poor woman. "Oh, this is too much—too much! You will kill me! You will kill me!"

Foreseeing that he might be disappointed of discovering the paper, Crane had provided himself with another, which differed a little from the first, and he now drew it out of his pocket. Bill had pen and ink, and they loosened the woman's arms. She was then ordered to affix her signature, under promise to be left alone if she complied; and with a remarkably firm hand she inscribed the name "Julie Gruesome" at the bottom. The doctor glanced at the chirography by the lantern light, and a look of ineffable joy crossed his face as he saw that there could be no denial of that name or handwriting. He left the cell with the keepers. The moment he was gone the mad woman got up from the cot.

"I know not what that paper said," she muttered, "nor do I know what your game is, Caleb Crane, but I do know that you are the cause of all my misery now, and that you would not imprison me here without a reason. But the paper is safely hidden—I know where—and, with what I have just discovered, I shall balk your plot most cunningly!"

And as she spoke she crept over to the back of the cell, and grasping one of the rusty iron rings welded in the wall with both hands, she gave it a turn, and pushed against the large, flat stone to which it was fastened. The stone swung back like a door, disclosing a dark passage in the wall, from which a cold, damp draught came.

"How fortunate I remembered the history of this old Revolutionary building!" she whispered. "How well I remembered that it was the abode once of the priests—and that its secret passages were discovered by my husband when he was with me. Godfrey told me all. And now I can escape from here and turn the tables on you. Caleb

Crane! Farewell, my prison—den of horrors—place of loathing! Farewell! May your dark and gloomy walls never again contain so unfortunate a being as I am, for I have almost seen the last of you now. Farewell!"

And as a great sigh proceeded from her lips, she passed through the yawning opening, the secret door of stone swung back in its place, and she vanished in the mysterious passage that was destined to lead her to the culmination of a design she had schemed out in her tortured mind.

CHAPTER XI.—The Doctor's Wife.

Godfrey Gruesome and Ruric had both been released from their cells by some mysterious means and Caleb Crane was furious over the news. And just as he learned of the escape an attendant acquainted him with the announcement that the mad woman in cell No. 4 wanted to see him. He set out for that cell immediately and was soon inside it.

Upon the bed, moaning as if in pain, the sick woman lay when the doctor entered, and the French woman was doing her best to comfort her mistress.

"What is the matter with you, my dear?" he asked, as he sat down upon the edge of the bed and seizing her wrists, felt of her pulse.

"Oh, I am completely unnerved from all this excitement," replied the lady, in tremulous tones.

"It was a great strain upon you," said Crane, and then he looked at her face and her hands in a curious manner, and added: "But, by Jove, I never saw a person change so in one night as you have done. It is startling. You look frightful. Indeed, one would suppose you had been ill a month, you are so altered."

"You know how nervous I am, Caleb," said the lady, as she furtively watched the doctor.

"That is true. And your disordered hair——"

"Oh! do not touch my head—it is splitting—and you would drive me wild if you lay a finger upon me!" she cried, shudderingly, as she drew back from him.

The doctor was very much perplexed, and fixed his yellow eyes upon her uneasily for an instant.

"I wonder how Ruric and his father got free?" said Crane.

"Heaven only knows," groaned the lady. "I hope they will not get out again to frighten me in this manner. I feared our effort to get the boy's money, and all the rest of our plot, was upon the eve of exposure, and that you and I would go to prison for it."

"Oh, have no fears on that score," laughed Crane, "for I have got things fixed so that we cannot fail."

"But if they had managed to escape?" persisted the lady.

"Of course it would have been bad for us. You must try to make that boy tractable in future, for he could ruin us."

"I shall try," said the woman. "And now leave me—I am all unstrung—I want to be left alone."

"An' me, madam?" queried Marie.

"You can go, too. A good sleep will quiet my nerves."

The woman was glad to get away, to hunt for her previous shorthand book, so she bowed and

withdrew, accompanied by the physician. As soon as she was alone, the whole demeanor of the sick woman changed, like a flash. She sprang from the bed, glided to the door, bolted it, as the lock was broken, and then went back to the dressing-case, where she deftly arranged her hair, and bound her head around with a bandage that covered her forehead. Hastily donning a wrapper, which lay upon a chair, she picked up a shawl, and out from its folds a book fell upon the floor. It was Marie's shorthand diary. She picked it up, and opening it, she sat down on a chair and began to peruse it, meantime muttering softly:

"How fortunate I understand phonography! I can learn from this book everything in connection with the plot the doctor has hatched, now, and he will find himself most strangely balked, when he imagines success is assured! I cannot permit this villainy to go on. But he is cunning and unscrupulous to an unusual degree, and would perhaps kill me if he discovers that I play him false. I never yet saw the smartest man, though, who is equal to a woman, when she sets her wits to work to dupe him."

Having mastered the contents of the book, she locked it up in a drawer of the bureau and took the key.

"And now," she muttered, "while I have the chance, I will commence the first step to thwart the doctor."

She arose, approached the wainscoted wall, and after an instant spent in searching, she opened the same concealed door in the woodwork through which the mad woman had entered the room the night before. Swiftly taking a candle from the table, she ignited it, entered the dark aperture, closed the door, and found herself in a narrow passage between the walls. Gliding ahead, the candle dimly lighting up the surrounding darkness, she came to a flight of stairs reeking with dampness, and holding her light aloft, she softly descended. Reaching another passage, and a second flight of stairs, down she went to the cellar of the building. She arrived in a vaulted passage of brick, one side being built of stone masonry, and pursuing it a short distance, she came to a pause at a large, flat stone. There was an iron latch on it, which had become rusted from the dampness, but she lifted it, turned the slab on a pivot, and disclosed the interior of Godfrey Gruesome's cell. The man lay upon his cot, bound hand and foot, and as the woman stepped into his cell with the light, he arose to a sitting posture, uttering a cry of amazement.

"Hush!" admonished the woman, raising her hand.

"You—here?" he gasped, watching her savagely.

"Ay, to liberate you on certain conditions."

"Name them, woman, name them."

"I will get you out of here if you will leave this asylum and never come near it again until I send for you. Besides this, you must promise not to divulge any of its secrets to a living soul outside of its walls until I give you my permission to do so—will you do it?"

"And leave you—my wife—with the fiend who brought me here! Never! No, no, no! I won't do it! Your effrontery is terribly—"

"Hark! Listen to me, Godfrey Gruesome," interrupted the lady, in low, intense tones. "You are laboring under a great mistake about me. I

am not half so wicked as you imagine. Nor do I care for the doctor. On the contrary, I loathe, hate and despise him. But he had instituted a vile plot to cheat me and my boy out of our rights. I must remain here until I discover all the details of this villainy. Then I will expose him and see that he is put in a much-deserved prison. Now you understand my motive and know why I want no interference in the counterplot I am forming to thwart our mutual enemy. Do you consent?"

"But you repudiated me. You denied that I was your husband—you swore that you did not know me, although I have not changed a trifle in eleven years."

"Did I?" queried the woman, with a singular smile. "Well, let us not speak of bygones just now. You will understand the case better when I unmask Caleb Crane. Go to the Irvingdale Arms and live. I will supply you with money until I send for you. Once I can prove a clear case against the delectable doctor his downfall is certain, your restoration as my husband will follow and you will be amazed at all you will then learn. Pray, do not refuse to believe me."

"Then I have misunderstood you?"

"Greatly. I love you yet, dearly, Godfrey. Consent! Consent!"

"Then I will do as you say. But if within a reasonable time I do not have a lucid explanation of this mysterious affair, I will return with the police and have this place pulled to pieces."

She found a penknife in his pocket, cut his bonds, and as she bade him follow her, she added, with a faint smile:

"You see, I have remembered about the secret passages in this old revolutionary building, you once told me of, and by exploring them, I have learned all about them, and turned them to good account."

They could hear the wild raving of the unlucky woman who was confined in cell No. 4, across the corridor, as they entered the hidden passage, re-closed the door and softly went upstairs. Upon reaching the lady's apartment and closing the panel-door, she was just about to show him how he could escape from the building by a back staircase to the yard, when there came an impatient rapping at the door, and the doctor's voice crying:

"Open the door and let me in! Do you hear!"

"Ah!" muttered the startled woman. "The doctor!"

"Where can I hide?" panted her husband, gazing wildly around.

The doctor had grown impatient, as he had been there knocking since the lady first left the room, and putting his shoulder against the door, he burst it open and hurried in.

CHAPTER XII.—The Man in the Closet.

Doctor Crane entered the room with an angry scowl upon his face, and glanced around. His wife had been too quick for him. She lay in bed, covered up to the neck, apparently asleep, and in the closet, peering out through a crack, was Godfrey Gruesome. Not a second had they lost in concealing themselves.

"By Jove! I've been knocking for five minutes," fumed the doctor. "The door was locked, or bolted,

rather, as I see my men broke the lock getting in, and—Hello! Asleep, by Jove!"

The little wretch seized the woman by the arm and shook her. She started back, and held the covers tightly about her so he could not see that she had on her wrapper, and opening her eyes, she inquired pettishly:

"Why did you disturb me from my nap?"

"I want to speak to you," growled the doctor. "I've set the boy at liberty. It won't do to imprison him. He might circulate ugly rumors about me. I want you to talk to him immediately; impress upon his mind the necessity of remaining perfectly still about all he hears and sees here—by Jove! and once he is obedient, we are safe to finish up this job. You are the only one who can influence him. He hates me like poison. Can't you do it?"

"Certainly, Caleb, if you so desire," replied the lady, in faint tones, "although I wish you had left it until I felt better. Of course, we must protect ourselves, and I will do all in my power to aid you."

"Good! I dislike to leave things until the last moment. When he is perfectly acquiescent, we must get rid of Marie. She knows too much already for our safety. I'll very quietly ship her back to France on board a vessel which will probably take part of its cargo at the Irvingdale dock this week. As soon as she is out of the way—"

"Ma foi! How kind of monsieur," interjected Marie's voice.

She entered the door outside of which she had been crouching and listening, as was her custom, to all the doctor said.

"Thunder!" gasped the doctor, arising aghast. "You!"

"Me, par bleu!" acquiesced Marie, with a sneer; "an' by gar, monsieur, I sink zat you meck ze gran meesteck ven you geet rid of me so ve' easy."

At the very juncture when it seemed as if a bitter quarrel between the two would ensue, the keeper, Hank, ran unceremoniously into the room.

"Ther man wot was in No. 7 is garn ag'in!" he exclaimed.

"Gone!" gasped the startled doctor, turning deathly pale.

"I jist diskivered his cell empty, his cut bonds a-lyin' on ther floor, an' ther cell locked up on ther outside, sir," proceeded Hank.

"I must go and see," muttered the doctor. "Go down again, Hank. I will follow you in a moment."

The man hurried out, and Crane turned to Marie:

"You must remain here until I return," said he.

"No, no, monsieur. I do not weesh zat you plays me some evilness, sair. I go immediate from ere to ze town. You break ze faith with me, sair. You weesh zat you cheat me of ze money you promise. But sacre tonnerre, I veel 'ave not ze least maistry veeth you. I go to Airvingdale, an' zere I veel tell all about you zat I do know."

A look of ungovernable fury crossed the doctor's smooth face, and he sprang toward her and seized her, crying:

"Traitoress! Betray me, would you! But I shall not give you the chance! I have no time now to waste talking to you, and I will lock you in this closet until I return!"

Marie was fighting the doctor hard. But her strength was no match for his. He soon got a firm clutch upon her, and slowly but surely dragged her over to the closet door, which stood ajar. His hand clutched the knob to fling it open. The woman could stand her intense anxiety no longer. Springing from the bed, she tore off the counterpane and glided up behind the doctor as he opened the door. At the same juncture she flung the bed-cover over his head. He uttered a cry of rage and amazement, but retained his clutch upon the French woman, who was yet struggling. Out of the closet glided Gruesome, while the doctor struggled with his disengaged hand to tear the cloth off his head, and diving between Crane's spread legs, Gruesome gave him a shove from the rear that sent the physician and the French girl headforemost into the closet. Crane uttered a howl of rage, and the panting Gruesome slammed the door shut and made a dash for the rear stair casement at which his frightened wife pointed silently. Hardly had he vanished, when the doctor emerged from the closet so suddenly as to collide with his wife, and both fell to the floor just as Ruric came in the hall door, and Marie followed the doctor out into the room. Ruric's mother arose to her feet, and rushed past the boy out into the hall. But her son saw her.

"Haunted! haunted! haunted!" he cried hollowly, pointing after her.

She was the veritable mad woman he had seen before, for her head was shorn and the false hair she had just worn was clutched in her hand, as it had come off when she fell, despite the bandage with which it had been fastened on.

CHAPTER XIII.—Mari Joins the Enemy.

Having been liberated from his cell by the doctor, Ruric had just entered his mother's room in time to see his father escape from the closet; the physician enveloped in the counterpane, clutching Marie, was shoved in in Gruesome's stead, and his mother run out into the hall. Marie made a run for the door to get out, but as the doctor feared she would keep her threat to expose his plot to the authorities, he ran after and caught her.

"Marie! Marie!" he gasped. "Do not be a fool! I was only jesting when I told my wife I would send you back to France on a ship. You are too valuable an assistant—"

"No, no, monsieur, I do not believe you, sair!" she cried.

But he held onto her tightly. Marie had seen what her mistress did, and beheld Gruesome's escape; but she was so angry over the doctor's admission of treachery, which she overheard, that she did not intend to tell him anything about it. She had not seen her mistress' shorn head, though, only having had time to see her disappearing out the door, hear Ruric cry out that he was haunted, and see the boy hurry into the hall after his mother.

"I tell you, you are mistaken!" shouted Crane, angrily.

"Vell," said the woman, suddenly struck with the idea to humor him and make her escape while he was off his guard.

"Zen you promise me by ze oath zat you veel not do zat, sair?"

"Why, of course," said Crane, seeing her apparently relenting.

And so saying, Caleb Crane hurried out in the hall. Neither Ruric nor his mother were visible anywhere, and the doctor hurried down to the dungeon, to see for himself how truly Hank spoke, his mind tortured by a thousand fears, in the meantime. But he had no doubt Ruric would be warned by his mother to act diplomatically to keep matters concerning Godfrey Gruesome a dead secret, at last for a while.

When he reached cell No. 7 in the dungeon, there stood Hank, but, as the man said, the cell was empty, Godfrey Gruesome's bonds lay upon the floor, evidently cut, and the man was gone. While the doctor was wondering at the man's mysterious escape, the mad woman in cell No. 4 was glaring out through the iron-barred door, her closely cropped head lending her a most hideous aspect, as she kept yelling at him. In the meantime Ruric saw his mother run into an empty room at the end of the hall, and he pursued her. When he got in she stood by the window, as calm and unconcerned as if nothing had occurred. The hair on her head was evidently undisturbed, the towel was bandaged around her forehead, and she stood glancing out the window in a pensive attitude.

"Mother!" gasped the bewildered boy, pausing in the middle of the apartment. "Mother, in heaven's name, explain this dreadful mystery, or I shall go mad."

"What do you mean, Ruric?" asked the lady, calmly.

"Have you a double, are you possessed of infernal powers, are you a human being or am I indeed mad?"

"My son," said the woman, in tones of sorrow, "you are sane, and I am not endowed with supernatural power—"

"But how is it that you at one moment appear to me the incarnation of a tender, loving mother, and next you are a most horrible looking, crazed creature—seen in two places at the same time; one moment having hardly any hair upon your head, the next instant having a luxuriant growth—sometimes repelling me, then again loving me tenderly."

"Ruric, you will soon learn all. Let this suffice. I have been playing a double character to Doctor Crane. He is a villain, and in order to baffle his evil designs, and learn what they are, I am obliged to do as I am doing. It is all for your interest I do it, and the end is fast approaching when I may have him brought to the bar of justice."

"Ah! Then there is some trickery in all these goings on?"

"Certainly, and yet there is a good deal of truth, too."

"Well, if you will not explain now, tell me how I can aid you."

"Hark! Some one is coming, Ruric."

She held up her finger, enjoining silence, and both listened. The next moment the door opened and Marie entered. The French woman glanced curiously at her mistress.

"Mon dieu!" she exclaimed. "So you are 'ere, eh?"

"Come in and close the door. I want no trifling, either."

"Sairtainly, madam," said the woman, complying.

"You saw all that passed in my room?" questioned the lady.

"Everying, madam. You gief ze prisonair hees leebairty."

"True. And you are going to desert the doctor, eh?"

"He ees voin rascals, aftair all I do for heem, to plot zat 'e send me avay, to geet reed of me."

"It certainly was mean of him. But you must not go away."

"Ah, madam, I value my life too mooch to remain here."

"He promised you five thousand dollars, didn't he? Well, he will not give it to you. If you will join me—aid me in my plans, I shall see that you get the amount when he is defeated. Mark me, he will injure you yet, if you give him the chance. As my ally, you will fare better."

The French woman's black eyes sparkled. She loved intrigue, as most all her nation do. Seeing a chance to get the money Crane threatened to swindle her out of, and the opportunity to retaliate on him, she was not long in assenting to join the lady's cause. A plan of action was then improvised, and the trio hurried back to the lady's bedroom, to avoid being caught plotting by the little doctor, whom they heard ascending the stairs. Crane was very much excited over the (to him) mysterious disappearance of Godfrey Gruesome, and hurried into the bedroom. Marie and Ruric had gotten out of sight, by retreating into the French woman's sleeping apartment, adjoining, and the boy's mother had gone to bed again before the physician entered. Crane approached the bed, and while Ruric and Marie in the room listened they heard him say:

"My dear, the man is gone, by Jove, and once he informs the authorities of what I did to him I may be arrested."

"What can we do?" queried the lady.

"Rapid work alone can save us. I got another paper signed by the mad woman giving me power of attorney. I'll hear from Bings soon."

"You gave the lawyer the paper, then?"

"Yes. And we will soon have your father's fortune now."

"My father's fortune? Ah! So that is the game?"

"Yes, of course. You know. I told you all about it. And once I am appointed Ruric's guardian I'll make a veritable lunatic of the boy, never fear!"

The listening boy shuddered at this threat. It was the second time the physician said he would do it.

"Make a maniac of him?" queried the woman.

"How?"

"Why, the same way I turned his brain once before. You know what effect the medicine has on the woman whom I've got safely locked up in cell No. 4. She was raving dreadfully a few minutes ago, as I had another dose, stronger, if possible, put in her food. I can give the boy some of it once the money is in my hands, and lock him in a cell, where he will be safe enough till he dies."

"What is the medicine? Have you got any of it here?"

"Yes," replied the doctor, drawing the vial from his pocket and handing it to her. "That is the stuff! It is an ingenious mixture of chloral hy-

drate, cocculus Indicus, atropa belladonna and dhatoora. Keep the vial here for future use."

"I shall," said the lady, with a look of grim satisfaction.

"I am going away to the city. This suspense will drive me wild. If Gruesome informs the police they will raid my house; but if I am not here they can do me no harm. You can apprise me if anything happens by telegraphing to the D—Hotel. Should the man not do me any injury I will return."

The doctor then kissed her good-by, gave her some minor instructions, and donning his hat, he went away. Marie and Ruric then entered the room. They overheard all that was uttered, and the trio seemed glad that the doctor had gone as he did. The day passed uneventfully by, save that Ruric's mother had a long, earnest conversation with Marie, gave the girl her shorthand book back, and then Ruric was sent to the city with a note from his mother to a prominent lawyer. When night fell the lady attired herself, put a shawl over her head and stole out of the building and across the yard.

Approaching the tool-house, she went between the fence and the tiny building, drew a small stone from the foundation, and out of the aperture thus made she pulled the paper which had been signed on the night the madhouse first contained Ruric's mother. At the same juncture the door of the tool-house was cautiously opened and the physician thrust out his head, peered around the edge of the building and saw her kneeling on the ground. He had not gone to the city at once, wishing to remain upon the premises until night-fall, unbeknown to any one, and see for himself what might transpire. He was evidently astonished to see the lady there, and more so upon observing that the paper she clutched in her hand was the same one stolen from his pocket on the night Marie's bed was set afire.

"At last!" muttered the lady, trembling with excitement. "I can bring this document to some account now to defeat him!"

The doctor looked amazed, crept out and up behind her. Reaching over her shoulder, he snatched the paper away.

"This is mine!" he exclaimed, pocketing it, while the lady sprang to her feet, uttering a startled cry, "and I want you, madam, to tell me how it came hidden here, and how you knew just where to come to look for it, by Jove!"

CHAPTER XIV.—Bedlam Breaks Loose.

Caught in the act of unearthing the paper, to sign which the mother of Ruric Gruesome had been maddened by the doctor, the lady became overwhelmed with confusion.

"I have been questioning the mad woman—she told me where she hid the paper. I meant I could bring the paper to some account by handing it over to you, Caleb, to defeat any resistance on the part of the boy, so that our success could be assured."

"Oh," said the doctor, his face clearing, "I see! But you must be much cuter than I am, managing to find out where the woman hid the paper. I even went to the extreme of torturing her to wring a confession of truth from her stubborn lips, but she would not admit anything to me."

"Ah, a woman's tact is much shrewder than a man's."

"That is so. I am glad you succeeded. This paper might have been the exposure of me. I'll destroy it now so that it will not avail any one."

And so saying, he drew it from his pocket and tore it to fragments, scattering them on the summer wind.

"Then you are not going to the city?" queried the lady.

"No. I have no fear, since Gruesome has made no move yet to get me into hot water. The gate-man has closed up the grounds, and if any one comes he can inform me in plenty time to get away by the river."

The lady nodded, they separated, and while the doctor went down the graveled path, Ruric's mother returned to the asylum.

Going upstairs, she met the boy in the hall.

"Ah, mother," said he, "I have been looking for you."

"Have you seen the man I sent you to?"

"Yes, indeed."

"What did he say?"

"That we are victims of a conspiracy, and that by this time to-morrow he and Benjamin Bings will have a conversation that will result in Caleb Crane's defeat."

"Good! Now run to your room. The doctor is coming."

As she said this she ran into her own apartment and locked the door, as the lock had been repaired that day. The doctor was to take up his quarters in another part of the house, pending her recovery so she had no fear of being bothered by him just then. The boy heard her lock the door, which, besides the exit leading to the back stairway, was the only means of getting out of the room, and then he walked away toward his own room. He had just passed the head of the stairs when he heard some one coming up. Pausing and glancing over the balustrade, he saw the dim, shadowy figure of a woman softly ascending. There was something peculiar about her that caused the boy to stop and watch her until she reached the top. The hall was dimly lit up, and all objects were but imperfectly to be seen; yet Ruric could distinguish her figure faintly. She wore a tight-fitting dress and waist, her sleeves were rolled up to the elbows, and a cape was thrown over her head.

"Who can she be, I wonder?" muttered the boy.

Before he could discover, the woman reached the head of the staircase, and then, like a flash, she whizzed through the hall and dodged into one of the lunatic wards.

"How peculiar!" mused Ruric, staring after her. He glanced up and down, but one one was in sight. His mother's door was shut, and he heard her talking to Marie; then he glided through the hall.

"I'll follow that woman," he muttered, "and see where she goes to. If I could only have seen her face I might have discovered whether she was one of the servants or not."

At this juncture Ruric heard footsteps in the hall behind him. Glancing around, he saw the doctor coming up the stairs. A moment later Crane approached him.

"Hello!" said he, staring at the boy. "What are you doing here?"

"Ah—the doctor!" exclaimed Ruric. "I'm glad you have come in."

"Why, what is the matter?"

Ruric explained to him about the mysterious woman.

"Can she be one of the servants, sir?" he asked, in conclusion.

"Why, no, by Jove! My room is locked up and I've got the key."

"Then who was she?"

"I have no female patients, so she must be a servant—"

"Hark!" suddenly interrupted Ruric. "What is that?"

There sounded a sharp click! at the end of the corridor. The doctor started, his face turning very pale.

"It sounds like one of the spring locks on the cell doors," said he. "They all open on the outside."

"Then you think——"

"One of the cells was just opened!"

"Hush! there goes another!" muttered Ruric.

There sounded another click and then another. Just then the figure of the woman loomed up in view, coming down the ward on the left-hand side, with that strange motion; and with every pause she made there sounded the noise of a spring lock opening.

The madhouse keeper looked very uneasy, and lighting a match he ignited a lamp hanging on the wall. A dull glow was thrown out on the corridor. Its rays revealed the face and figure of the mysterious woman, and a simultaneous cry burst from Ruric and the doctor.

"My mother!" shouted Ruric, in bewilderment.

He reeled back and glared at the woman with bulging eyes. She heard him, and started forward a step, her dress fluttering, her hands raised to her shorn head and a wild, maniacal light appearing in her startled eyes. The boy's amazement was justifiable, as he had seen his mother enter her room and lock the door. Indeed, when he first started in pursuit of this strange creature he heard his mother in her apartment talking to Marie Montmedy in distinct tones. The lady could not have emerged from her room without the boy seeing her, and yet before him was the living semblance of that mad being who had so often puzzled him before in the same dress and cloak, her hair cropped short, and the same terrible expression of madness upon her face.

"She said she had no supernatural powers!" raved the boy, "and yet if this is natural the whole world must have reversed the order of things! She is my mother, or I am, as I have claimed before, a haunted boy!"

"Ruric, my son!" yelled the mad creature, holding out her arms.

"Thunder!" hissed the doctor. "She has escaped from cell No. 4!"

"Oh!" groaned Ruric, rushing up to her.

"Speak—tell me—is this a part of your masquerade or is it a reality?"

"Ho! ho! ho! Listen to him rave!" shouted the woman, as she recoiled a step. "He is mad, mad, mad! Ho! ho! ho!"

"You shall speak!" desperately shouted the boy.

"I'll make you!"

"She has opened nearly all the cells!" interrupted Crane, as the lamplight revealed to his startled glance what the unfortunate woman had done. "The lunatics will all get out! Run for the keepers, Ruric—quick!"

The boy started to obey; but ere he had taken a step three of the most ferocious-looking maniacs sprang in his path. He could not advance a step now without getting them out of his way, and it brought him to a pause.

"We are shut off from the main hall!" he cried.

"To remain here is certain death!" gasped the doctor.

"I cannot help it. Get these fellows out of my way."

The doctor started to do so, but several more, who were in close proximity to him, caught hold of his coat. He aimed a vicious blow at them, and as it caught one and knocked him down the others retreated, uttering cries of anger and affright, and he followed up this advantage. Running toward the lunatics who barred Ruric's exit, he drove them back, and told the boy to hurry away. Before Ruric could advance a step, though, the men behind them rushed up, and both the boy and the doctor were obliged to back up against an open cell door and face them with a steady, unflinching stare.

They sullenly and defiantly returned the glance for a moment; then they were forced to drop their gaze and retreat, with a sneaking, whipped air, easy victims of stronger wills than their own diseased minds. The doctor then ran in among them, bidding the boy to follow. A hand clutched Ruric's arm as he attempted to do so. Glancing around he saw the woman whom he imagined was his mother. She had a tenacious grip on his arm and was dragging him forcibly toward one of the cell doors. At the same moment one of the other lunatics set up a howl; one after another joined in with different cries—shouts, expletives and fierce denunciations—and as this noise swelled into a loud, hoarse chorus the place became a veritable Bedlam. One of the unfortunates, more deft and powerful than the rest, adroitly caught the doctor by the back of the neck, jerked him over upon the floor, and the whole yelling mass fell upon him. Beneath the entire crowd of struggling lunatics the physician fought with ungovernable fury, all the while calling for help. In the clutches of the woman, Ruric was suddenly pulled into the cell, the maniac gabbling and raving incoherently all the while, and although he struggled with might and main to get away, the boy's strength was inadequate to accomplish it.

"Mother!" he cried, imploringly, "let me go! Those maniacs out there will kill the doctor! Are you, too, mad?"

"Let you go? Never!" she shrieked. "Do you know what I want?"

"No!" he panted. "You are a maniac! Let go of me!"

"Then I'll tell you. It is your life. You aided him to deceive me!" she hissed, in malevolent tones, "and now you will pay for it!"

She flung him upon the floor of the cell, her eyes blazing like live coals of fire, and her long, sinuous fingers closed around his throat with a clutch from which he could not escape.

Ruric and Crane had the fight of their lives on their hands with the maniacs. But Ruric was strong and Crane had had so much experience with the patients that the trouble did not last long. When it was all over Mrs. Gruesome made her appearance. Ruric was still uncertain if she was his mother, and made up his mind to find out. So he seized the woman's hair and drew it off.

She uttered a cry of alarm. But Ruric saw she was the exact counterpart of the crazy woman Crane had brought down to the dungeon.

CHAPTER XV.—Which Is Which?

Ruric's mother was taken by surprise and recoiled a step, her hands going up to her head, covering the shorn crown. In the boy's hands was clutched the false hair she had worn, and she saw that it was nothing but a switch, so deftly arranged as to cover her head after the manner of a wig. But without the bandage she wore to cover the sides and to hold the false hair on her head, she could not have worn it as she had been doing for the past few days, even deceiving the lynx-eyed doctor.

"What did you do that for?" she demanded, angrily.

"I wanted to see if my theory was wrong," replied the boy.

"Give it back to me, instantly!" she exclaimed.

"Certainly; here it is, mother," and he handed back the hair.

The lady walked over to the mirror, and rearranging it upon her head, she turned to Ruric with the remark:

"I don't want you to betray this secret."

"I won't, if you want it kept."

"Should you do so, you will ruin my plans."

"Depend upon me, mother I am wholly in the dark as to what this strange mystery means, yet I suppose I shall have to see all these perplexing happenings and wait for enlightenment until the proper time comes."

"There is no other way to do, my son."

"I am satisfied, though, of one thing," said Ruric, in gloomy tones, "and that is the fact that you have a double in this asylum. I have always imagined that it was you I saw in two widely separated places within a short time of each occurrence. Now I have proved to my entire satisfaction that I was mistaken. Yet your double at times acted as if she knew I was her son, and called me her boy. Now, see here, I want to test this discovery a little further."

"How do you mean, Ruric?"

"Here is a pencil and a piece of paper. Will you write for me, 'when in the course of human events,' so that I can see if you yet have recovered from the lameness you once complained of, when I asked you to write to my college professors some time ago? Besides that, your chirography, spelling and composition were strangely altered at that time, and not at all like what you were in the habit of sending me while I was away at school."

The boy's mother smiled quietly, and sitting down at a table she inscribed the sentence Ruric dictated.

The boy glanced at it eagerly.

"It is the same as you always wrote," commented he. "The same pretty writing and correct spelling. Now how in the name of goodness is it you could not do this when I asked you once before, I'd like to know, mother?"

"That is something I cannot yet explain to you."

"The reason I wanted to test you," explained the boy, "was because I noticed that the writing on the envelope you sent to the attorney by me was just the same as you always wrote."

"Let us end this matter right here," said the lady. "I do not want you to question me any further. To-morrow or the next day you will find out all you want to know. Now, have patience, and retire to your room. You are absolutely making yourself sick, fretting over all these mysteries."

Ruric was obliged to be contented with this much information.

He was mystified over his mother's actions.

Leaving the room, he sought his own apartment, and after retiring, he lay awake fully an hour, thinking the matter over.

"It seems very strange that she should marry the doctor, in the first place," mused he, "well knowing that my father was alive, when he disclosed his identity, at the now burnt cottage, in the character of Dan. Yet she did it. Then she seemed to be an enemy of mine, too, in some things, in spite of the kind way she treated me after her marriage, for she agreed with Crane to make a maniac of me, so that the doctor could gain possession of my third of the legacy left by James Forrester, her father. But the scene of horror I beheld in the cottage that night—my mother a raving maniac—it seemed all so vivid and real—yet next morning there was not a sign of it—she was home, in her accustomed place as usual, and told me I must have dreamed that I saw her carried here by Marie and Doctor Crane. Yet why is her hair cut short—why does she wear that false hair—who is the maniac woman that is the exact image and double of her in every respect? My mother has some plan maturing to ruin the doctor. Can it be that she only married him to thwart his wicked designs? It must be so. But patience—patience! I may soon learn the truth of the maddening mystery of this infernal mad-house."

The following day broke, rainy and gloomy.

After breakfasting, Ruric saw his mother go to her room, with the vial in her hand containing the strange drug with which Caleb Crane had maddened the woman in the cell No. 4.

The doctor was in his office, preparing some medicine for a patient, and as the four keepers were at breakfast in the kitchen, the boy resolved to go down in the dungeon, to see if the mad woman was really confined there, and to gain a good look at her again, to see if he was mistaken.

With no one around to interfere with him, Ruric took some matches, a candle, and descending to the cellar, he soon reached the cell in which the woman was confined.

She stood at the iron-barred door, and was staring out at him when he paused opposite her.

To Ruric's amazement, he saw that her face and her deportment had lost the madness characterizing her before.

"Ruric!" she exclaimed, eagerly, as soon as she saw who he was. "Oh, Ruric, my son, for pity's sake unfasten the door and let me out of here."

The boy was startled.

Her tones, voice actions and all were those of his mother!

"Let you out?" he gasped. "No, no! You are a fraud—"

"Ruric, I am your mother. Do you not recognize me?"

"My mother? No, I just left her upstairs,"

"Do not be deceived. The woman you have seen is an impostor—a cunning maniac, who looks ex-

actly like me and, who is impersonating me to deceive you all."

"Goodness! how sanely she speaks!" gasped the bewildered boy. "Last night she was a raving lunatic—now she speaks as lucidly as I do! What am I to make of this?"

He stared at the woman and saw tears were streaming from her eyes.

"If you doubt me," continued the prisoner, plaintively, "grant me one favor. Send the doctor here. One word of conversation with him is all I ask. That will set matters right. I have been made the victim of that mad woman. She has some cruel design in view—probably to kill you all."

"No," said the boy, resolutely shaking his head. "I won't let you out, nor will I apprise the doctor, I admit that you do look like my mother—that you are her exact image, and have her voice and the same actions. But there is some vile roguery going on here, and I'll soon know the truth."

"Ruric—would you be so blinded—so deceived?" wildly cried the woman. "Look upon my face—watch me closely—can you not see that I am your mother? Oh, boy, boy, do not commit a terrible error and murder me this way. I cannot live in this detestable cell much longer."

"Oh, I make no mistake," said Ruric, calmly. "Last night you were as mad as a March hare—but now you have got a lucid spell. That's the way with most of you. I am not to be deceived, cunning as you are. I am going now."

"No! no! no! frantically shrieked the unhappy woman, shaking the iron door in a frenzy. "Do not leave me, Ruric—come back! Come back! I will blame you with my dying breath if you do not lend me your aid. Will you—oh, will you help me, Ruric? For heaven's sake—I implore you!"

But the boy hurried away determinedly, not knowing that she had regained her senses owing to the effects of the drugs wearing off.

Glancing back, all he could see were her hands thrust out between the bars of the cell door, and hear her calling him back.

Leaving the dungeon with a visible shudder, he entered a room adjoining the doctor's office, and to his surprise he heard Benjamin H. Bings, the lawyer, talking to Caleb Crane. Stealing over to a door the boy listened to hear what was said.

CHAPTER XVI.—The Doctor's Little Plan.

Ruric peeped through the keyhole of the door, and saw the doctor sitting at his desk, while beside him sat the stiff, straight, hollow-eyed lawyer, with his rusty plug hat on, without a smile upon his face.

"I don't like the delay at all, Bings, and I won't put up with it much longer, by Jove—that is all!"

"My Christian friend," observed the lawyer, "as heretofore said, I cannot help it. The second paper you caused to be signed and sworn to before a notary public will give you power of attorney for your second wife and her child, Ruric, the other heir, but I know that the lad is not crazy, as you have just said, and I cannot, as hereinafter will appear, use a false statement."

"You say the boy must act for himself, and that his mother was legally appointed his guardian, eh?"

"True—true, my worthy client."

"Suppose I prove he is incompetent—a raving maniac?"

"If you can do so you could have yourself appointed his legal guardian, as said heretofore. But that would not affect his inheritance in the least. You cannot touch it, my dear sir."

"I can secure my wife's portion for her, though?"

"Doubtless. But can't she secure it herself?"

"Yes, of course, she can."

"Then, my dear sir, she must do so."

"There must be some way, by Jove, to gain control of that part willed to Ruric Gruesome, isn't there?"

"Only his death would leave it to his mother."

"Ha!" exclaimed the doctor.

The tone in which he gave utterance to this word was so sinister as to make the listening Ruric shudder.

"Well," said the doctor, "with the power of attorney I can act in behalf of my wife and her son; that is beyond all dispute. But you know my object now. I want to get the boy's portion in my hands, by Jove, and get it I will if there is any possible means."

"The will," said the lawyer, with a dry cough, "is worded so that if the boy is alive he will inherit, as aforesaid, at legal age. In event of his death his mother will inherit the entire fortune. The boy, as the Latin has it, is homo alieni—under a guardian's control. His mother is the guardian, as hereinafter will appear."

"Then his share cannot be touched until he is twenty-one?"

"Not a cent, my Christian friend, not a cent."

"Then there is no need of mentioning him any more?"

"None in the least. Finis coronat opus; the end crowns the work."

"When can we finish the settlement?" asked Crane, after a pause.

"To-morrow, as heretofore mentioned, I will begin work. Within a week the entire case will be settled. Expect me here to-morrow with a legal friend. He will bring certain documents to be signed by you, as aforementioned, and you must be present with your wife and her son, your witness, the mentioned Marie Montmedy, and at 3 P. M. you can look for us."

"Good!" said Crane. "I shall look for you, and will be ready."

When he was gone, Caleb Crane returned to his office, sat down, and Ruric heard him mutter in faintly audible tones:

"So there is no way to get the boy's legacy, excepting by his death. That is very awkward, to be sure. I am not a murderer, but I think that I can kill him for a while, and yet gain mastery of the situation. Now there is bottle No. 37 in my case, which is equally as efficient as No. 44, with which I turned that woman's brain. It contains a very simple compound, but the effect is monstrously fine as I have frequently tested it. Curare—a fine neurotic paralyzant of the motor nerves, which, when it is introduced under the skin acts like chain-lightning. The patient is to all appearances dead, and in reality not far from it, with the spine and heart paralyzed. Indeed, there is only one way to tide the victim over the effect, and that, too, is a delicate operation, by

Jove! Yet I am not afraid to risk using it on the boy."

"Oh, but ain't you?" muttered Ruric, with a grimace.

"It will serve my purpose admirably," went on Crane.

"And I won't submit to it!" muttered Ruric.

"I'll use it to-night," said Crane, "and a coroner's inquest would only reveal the fact that he died from paralysis of the heart, from natural causes, and then I can revive him, and bury a mummy—that is, if I don't actually kill him under the operation, by Jove!"

"The deuce you will!" Ruric thought.

"Then," continued Crane, "I can gain possession of his share of the legacy for my wife, and it will fall into my hands afterward."

"I doubt it!" muttered Ruric, grimly.

A moment later the doctor left his office. Ruric went out of the room, his mind trouble with misgivings over what he overheard.

"That man would not hesitate at any foul means to carry his point!" thought the boy with a shudder, "and I must beware of him. He won't operate his infernal drugs on me if I can help it."

He went to his mother's room and told her what he overheard the doctor and the lawyer saying, and in conclusion he repeated the soliloquy of Crane, whereat the lady looked startled. She warned the boy to be careful of what he ate and drank, and told him to look out constantly for an unexpected attack. The boy went out afterward and had his supper in Irvingdale. Returning to the asylum, he retired to his room. It was a pleasant bed-chamber near his mother's apartments, furnished very nicely, having two windows, one door and a closet, in the top of which was a scuttle leading to the roof. He locked and bolted the door leading to the hall, lit the lamp, undressed, and within an hour he went to bed and fell asleep. The clock on her mantel chimed the hour of ten. As the last silvery note of the bell ceased, the closet door was pushed open very cautiously and the doctor glided into the room. By another scuttle he had gained the roof, crossed it to the one over Ruric's room, and thus gained ingress to the apartment. Ruric had turned the light of his lamp low, and in the dim and uncertain light, the doctors' figure looked shadowy and obscure. In one hand he held a small sponge saturated with chloroform, and in the other a tiny vial of curare, and a sharp lancet to puncture the sleeping boy's skin, in order to administer the deadly drug. Creeping stealthily over to the bedside, he hovered over the boy an instant, and then reached out his hand to place the saturated sponge under Ruric's nostrils. It touched the boy's face—he awoke with a start, but before the doctor could stop him he sprang out of bed.

"Rascal!" cried Ruric. "So you have come to drug me, have you?"

CHAPTER XVII.—Preparing the Trap.

Seeing that his plan to chloroform Ruric and administer the fatal drug to the boy was defeated, Crane uttered a cry of rage. The sponge dropped from his hand, and he hastily thrust the lance and vial of curare into his pocket. The open closet door showed Ruric how the man got into the room, for Crane had left the scuttle open.

"He knows what I want to do to him," muttered the doctor, in amazement. "How did he discover it?"

Ruric overheard this remark and replied:

"Yes, I do know that you want to drug me. You want to give me the semblance of death in order to cheat the law out of my inheritance. I'll tell you how I discovered it. You and Mr. Bings were talking over the matter of the fortune in your office while I was in an adjoining room. When the lawyer was gone I overheard the soliloquy covering what you are now contemplating doing. That is how it was."

"Oh!" exclaimed Crane, his queer yellow eyes snapping.

"Now you leave this room!" exclaimed Ruric, pointing at the door.

So, without a word to Ruric, and unsuspecting that his wife and Marie were plotting his downfall, he unlocked the door and left the boy's bedroom. Ruric uttered a sigh of relief when he was gone.

"A good riddance! I just awakened in time," thought he, "and as I'm safe for the rest of the night I'll retire again."

Following this suggestion he went to bed and slept undisturbed until the following morning, when his mother summoned him to her room and gave him a note to deliver.

"Why—it is for my father!" he commented.

"Yes. You will find him at the D—Hotel, Ruric."

"Have you determined upon anything?"

"I have—you shall discover what it is later on."

Ruric then told his mother what happened the previous night.

"I am in constant danger now," he added, "for if I remain under this roof much longer the doctor will make another effort to get me in trouble."

"Have no fear, my boy, he shall not injure you."

Ruric then left the asylum with the note. Proceeding to Irvingdale, he went to the hotel and asked for Godfrey Gruesome. His father was quartered in room No. 5, and the boy was ushered upstairs and admitted.

"Why, Ruric, what brings you here?" was his father's first query.

"My mother sent you this note," said the boy.

With eager, trembling hands, the man took the note, opened the envelope, and read the missive. A look of intense satisfaction overspread his face.

"At last. At last!" he exclaimed.

"What is it, father?"

"She wants me to call at the asylum this afternoon at three o'clock. This fatal mystery will then be ended."

"Thank heaven!" fervently exclaimed the boy.

Returning to the asylum, he told his mother what his father said, and saw the doctor drive away in his buggy. Marie came in with her bonnet and shawl on while the boy was conversing with his mother, and the lady said:

"Well, Marie, have you been to New York?"

"Yais, madam," replied the woman, sitting down.

"You brought the vial the doctor gave me to the lawyer?"

"Zat I deed, madam, an' 'e say zat 'e 'ave ze contents analyzed by one doctaire, to proove vot eet do."

"Then he will call here?"

"No; but Mr. Bings, he come for sure."

"Did he confer with Mr. Crane's lawyer?"

"Oh, yais, an' Mr. Bings ees ver' mooch disgust zat ze doctaire eez such a bad mans."

"Naturally. Ah, such a surprise this will be for Mr. Crane!"

"But, madame, eet eez safe enough for me?"

"You need fear nothing, Marie."

"I 'ope not, madam."

"Give all your evidence and no one will harm you for all you did against me. I have promised you that. Besides, you shall have five thousand dollars when all is ended. Had you trusted the doctor, he would never have paid you the sum he promised. You know how tricky and treacherous he is. He would have cheated you and in the end he would have shipped you out of the country. You know enough against him to secure his imprisonment, and he feared you. Being an unscrupulous man, you know he would hesitate at nothing to secure his own safety."

"True, madame, true," asserted the girl. "Eet eez bettair zat I stick to you, an' sen' heem to ze jails."

"You gave the lawyer your shorthand book?"

"I deed; an' eet eez all translate by zees time."

"Then no better proof can be produced. You have a detailed record of all Crane's villainy from beginning to end in it, and nothing more conclusive could be produced."

"Besides, madam," added Marie, "ze attorney meck zat I swear to ze evidence, vile I am on hees office."

The lady smiled and nodded.

"Good! And now I am ready!" she exclaimed.

Ruric left the room and went out in the yard.

"Such a series of events have followed my return from school!" he mused. "I never heard of anything like it before! Haunted by the image of my own mother—a helpless witness of a singular train of occurrence which I cannot understand, it is a wonder I am not crazy myself—maddened by all that has happened."

He saw the doctor returning a few moments later, and not wishing to meet the yellow-eyed little rascal, he turned to enter the building when he saw a man dash at the doctor's buggy out in the road. It was his father, and the moment Crane saw him he sprang out of the vehicle, leaving the driver in the seat, ran toward the asylum, and just as Ruric hurried in the main entrance the doctor followed, leaving the door standing wide open.

In an instant the furious Godfrey Gruesome after him, the doctor slammed the door shut, and then, turning upon the returned sailor, he hissed, in sibilant tones:

"You have run into a trap, Godfrey Gruesome, for you will never leave this asylum again alive!"

CHAPTER XVIII.—Conclusion.

Ruric had drawn aside from the two men, and stood at the foot of the staircase, and as the doctor finished speaking Crane raised a whistle to his lips and blew a shrill blast. It was a signal summoning the keepers.

"Father! Run for your life!" shouted the boy.

"Stand where you are!" roared Caleb Crane.

"No! You shall not murder me!" gasped Mr. Gruesome.

"This way—follow me!" cried Ruric.

There sounded the hurried patter of approaching footsteps, as the keepers came running through the hall. Godfrey Gruesome saw Ruric dash up the stairs, beckoning to him, and the man hastened after him. The moment Gruesome reached the upper hall he saw Ruric standing in front of his mother's room door, beckoning to him. The door was thrown open the next moment, and the lady appeared upon the threshold.

"Ruric, what is the matter?" she cried upon beholding the boy.

"My father!" he panted, pointing at the man.

"Julia!" interposed Gruesome.

"Oh, Godfrey—my husband."

"I could not wait until three o'clock to come here—"

"Ah! What are those voices—those footsteps approaching—"

"The doctor and the keepers!" cried Ruric.

"They are pursuing me!" panted Gruesome.

"Come in here, then—quick!"

Just then Crane and the keepers appeared at the head of the stairs.

"Hold on! Don't let that man in your room!" Crane roared.

The two keepers made a dash at Gruesome.

But ere they had taken two steps, the lady caught hold of him, pulled him into the room, and as Ruric glided in after him the door was slammed shut in the enraged keeper's faces with a bang, the key was turned, the bolt shot into the socket, and they were barred out.

Bang! went Crane's fist against the panels.

"Open the door, or, by Jove, I'll burst it in!" he shouted.

Godfrey Gruesome put his back against it.

"What shall I do?" he panted.

"Why didn't you stay away until I told you to come?" whispered his wife. "You may ruin my plans."

"I couldn't! I couldn't!" replied Gruesome.

"They may make a prisoner of you now."

"No! See, I am armed."

He drew a revolver from his pocket.

"No bloodshed here," remonstrated his wife.

"Not unless they drive me to it!" he replied, grimly.

But just then the sliding panel in the wall opened and the crazy-looking woman from cell No. 4 bounded into the room. The doctor was the first to recover from his surprise.

"That woman has escaped again, by Jove!" he cried.

"Monster!" shrieked the crazy-looking creature, "you have gone back on me. But, thank heaven, I found a secret passage leading from that cell, and have managed to get out. Is this the way you treat me after all I have done for you? Is it? Is it? Is it?"

There was a dark look upon her face, and Ruric and his father now had ample opportunity of seeing what an exact image she was of the woman who figured as the doctor's wife. Not only did she look like Mrs. Gruesome, but her voice and every gesture were exactly the same.

"Fool!" commenced the doctor.

"Caleb Crane," interposed Ruric's mother.

"Ah! you—"

"Do not deceive yourself any longer."

"What about?"

"About this woman and I."

"How do you mean, you traitress?"

"I am not your wife!"

"Not my wife?"

"No! I am Julia Gruesome——"

"Impossible."

"This woman is your real wife——"

"My wife?"

"She is Laura—my twin sister!"

"Great heaven!"

"She never died in Europe as you once gave out, but came here in concealment so that you could cheat me and my son out of the fortune left us by James Forrester—my father! I know all about your plot now!"

Godfrey Gruesome could only clutch Ruric's arm, and with a look as if he doubted the evidence of his senses stare from his wife to her sister and then at Crane. The moment the disclosure came, so intent were they all with what was transpiring, they did not notice that the negro porter had admitted two men to the building and that they now stood in the doorway. The two new arrivals heard all that passed, and were as much interested as the other spectators. One was Benjamin H. Bings, and the other a stranger.

"To continue the deception," went on Mrs. Gruesome, in excited tones, "the physician was married to his own wife at the Irvingdale church, people imagining she was me. I was recaptured the same day and dosed with more of the diabolical medicine with which Caleb Crane hired Marie Montmedy to drug me. Confined in the dungeon cell, a raving maniac, I was helpless to undo the deception——"

"Then, when Dan—my father—at the cottage—declared his identity, as it was Laura Crane he spoke to, it was no wonder she did not recognize him," said Ruric.

"Exposed! All! Everything!" groaned the doctor.

"I now see why I imagined I was haunted!" cried Ruric.

"And I," said Godfrey Gruesome, "understand why I was deceived."

"A word from me, if you please," interrupted Laura Crane.

"Say what you will," said Ruric's mother, bitterly. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself for your complicity in this work."

"True," said the woman, sadly. "I have been a wicked woman, and I am now heartily sorry for the part I took in this plot. I have been amply punished. But it was my wicked husband who induced me to do what I did."

"Fool! Fool! Shut up!" yelled Crane, glaring at her angrily.

"No, I won't! I have been your victim too long!" the poor creature retorted. "I was forced into it. Julia—my sister—for pity's sake forgive me! I am very, very repentant."

She fell upon her knees before Ruric's mother, with her clasped hands upraised supplicatingly, and tears streaming from her eyes.

"You have grossly wronged my husband, my son, and myself," said Ruric's mother, "but as you are repentant I freely forgive you, Laura, and hope you will profit by the lesson you have learned. Be a good woman in future and you will prosper."

At this juncture Crane caught her by the arm.

"You must be mad!" he hissed. "We have not entirely lost the game yet. We have got the three of them caged up in this house, by Jove, and I will call every one in the establishment to help me hold them here. I will not accept defeat. I am not yet baffled. Once I make prisoners of them I will finish this game, and—win!"

He sprang toward the door as he spoke, but the stranger accompanying Mr. Bings caught hold of him by the arm.

"Caleb Crane, you are my prisoner, in the name of the law!" he exclaimed, showing the startled doctor a detective's badge.

"Your prisoner?" stammered Crane, turning very pale.

"This lawyer has made the charge against you, in behalf of Mrs. Gruesome. We just overheard all that passed!"

Crushed at his defeat, Crane uttered a dismal groan.

"I am lost!" he gasped. "I throw up the sponge."

"And it is about time!" said the officer, as he snapped a pair of handcuffs on the man. "And as these two keepers are accomplices of yours, I'll haul them in, too!"

The detective then went away with his prisoners. Then Ruric, his mother and father, and Marie bade Laura Crane good-by, and knowing that the doctor would leave her enough for her subsistence, they went away. Taking up their quarters at an hotel, there they remained until they came in receipt of the fortune which had caused so much unhappiness, strife and intrigue. Caleb Crane, Hank and Bill were tried for their offenses, the drug and the French woman's short-hand book, added to the evidence of all the parties interested sending them to jail. Marie was paid by Mrs. Gruesome and went away to France. The wife of the perfidious madhouse keeper disappeared from Irvingdale soon after, and the reunited husband and wife went to New York to take up their residence with Ruric, to escape the scene of their past misery. No longer a haunted boy, since the madhouse mystery was solved, and soon after his graduation distinguished himself as an honor to his profession. And so we must leave them—the innocent and just enjoying benefits of their fortitude and courage—the wicked and designing reaping the whirlwind of their iniquity at last.

Next week's issue will contain "NAT O' THE NIGHT; or, THE BRAVEST IN THE REVOLUTION."

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AL, THE ATHLETE, OR, THE CHAMPION OF THE CLUB

By R. T. BENNETT

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER IX.—Stealing a Boy.

"When they reached the place Bud told them she lived in she was gone," replied Miss Harlow, "and no one seemed to know where she went."

"Some of her husband's work, no doubt."

"Papa thinks so, too. But he has Detective Fox hunting for the woman, and sooner or later he will run her down."

While they were speaking Bud had been changing his clothes, and he now appeared in his street costume, and said:

"I'm ready to go home, Jenny."

"Remember what I told you about your breathing exercises," warned Al, as he shook hands with Jenny and bowed her out of the door.

"I'll do as you ordered," answered Bud, and they departed.

Ten minutes later Marsh came running into the gym, and taking Al aside, he said in low tones:

"Say, those tramps who had Bud have a camp in the woods beside the road leading into Midwood. While passing I heard them talking, and I crept up close and listened to what they were saying. The fellow called Scotty was telling his friends that he had seen Miss Harlow go by toward this gym, and he stated that the young lady was on her way in the buggy to get her little brother. The brute then told his gang that they must not fail to aid him in holding up the carriage, for they had to get the boy into their hands at any risk, as they would get a good sum of money for him from some person who had engaged Scotty to do the job. So I ran back to warn Miss Harlow not to go that way, and——"

"You are too late!" said Al, despairingly. "They left a few moments ago. And now it's up to us to run after her, and see if we can't prevent this villainy. Are you ready?"

"Run!" was Nick's only reply.

The two boys pulled their caps down firmly on their heads, and the next instant they were speeding down the dusty road like a pair of race-horses, haunted by the worst of fears for Bud's safety.

"Where was the hold-up to take place?" gasped Al, as they dashed along. "Did the rascals mention where the ambushade would be?"

"No; but I imagine that it will be somewhere near their camp."

"And that was——"

"About a mile from here—near the road which leads to the old quarry. We can make it in a few minutes at a sprint."

"Put on steam, Nick."

Faster ran the two boys, and presently they turned a bend in the road.

There was an old, abandoned toll-gate at some

distance ahead, and peering through the arch they saw Miss Harlow's buggy standing in the middle of the road, a dirty, ragged tramp holding her pony by the bit.

A wild shriek from the girl was now wafted to their ears by the breeze, and they saw two more of the hobos pulling Bud out.

The little fellow was struggling with all his might, but he was no match for the powerful men who held him, and they dragged him out of the carriage and one of them picked him up in his arms and started for the woods.

The other one now saw the two boys approaching, said something to his companion, and pointing at them, they picked up some stones.

"Going to fight!" commented Nick, grimly.

"I guess we can do something in that line ourselves," replied Al.

Whiz! came a fusillade of stones as he spoke.

"I'm hit!" groaned Nick, pausing.

A stone had taken him in the head, and he flung up his arms, and fell to the ground stunned.

"Heavens!" gasped Al, glancing at him in alarm.

But he did not stop, for he imagined that his chum was killed, and he had his mind made up to avenge him if it were possible.

Jennie saw the boy coming, and it seemed to inspire her with new courage, for she grasped the reins and drove the pony straight after the man who was running away with her brother.

"Help me, Al!" she screamed, beckoning to him.

"Run him down!" shouted the boy vigorously.

He dodged several stones the tramp let fly at him, and as he was now pretty close to the big brute, he leaped forward fearlessly, and got a grip on the villain's throat with his hand.

The man beat him with his fists, but the boy paid no heed to this and bore the fellow backward, both falling to the ground.

Here they rolled around in the dust, in a furious struggle.

Jennie had driven her pony straight at the tramp, who now dropped Bud, and as the horse ranged up behind the man, she struck the animal with her whip.

With a neigh of pain, the pony went up on its haunches, and then its hoofs came down like a thunderbolt upon the tramp's back!

The hobo was sent flying to the ground.

CHAPTER X

At the Old Quarry.

Although Al Adams was a powerful little fellow for his age, he was no match for the man with whom he was struggling.

The result was that the man turned him over upon the ground, and wrenching the boy's grip from his windpipe, he sprang to his feet in an instant.

It was Scotty, and he was in a fearful rage when he saw who Al was.

"Blast yer!" he yelled, as he raised his heavy hobnailed brogan, "I owes yer a grudge, an' I'm goin' ter pay yer off right now!"

And he gave the boy a savage kick, which wrung a groan from Al that stunned him for an instant.

Rushing over to his friend, upon whom Jennie

had driven the pony, he pulled the horse back, and paying no heed to the shower of blows the girl rained on him with her whip, he yelled, excitedly:

"Git up, Mike, and save yerself!"

Up scrambled the fallen hobo, and seeing Bud sprint away, he ran after the little fellow and caught him from the ground in his arms again while Scotty was backing the pony.

The third man now aided the man who had Bud, and the pair dashed into the woods, where they disappeared among the trees. The girl sprang from the carriage, but Scotty dashed away in pursuit of his companions and vanished from view.

Then Miss Harlow's courage gave out, and, too nervous and excited to go any further, she burst into tears, and cried, appealingly:

"Al! Al! Where are you?"

She had not seen what happened to her sweetheart.

The young athlete had recovered his senses, staggered to his feet, and glaring around in a dazed fashion, he saw the girl and heard her cry.

In a moment more he was himself again, and hastened over to her.

"Jennie he exclaimed, "have they injured you?"

"Oh, Al!" she sobbed, running to meet him, "they got away with Bud!"

"Hang them! Where did they go?"

"They carried him into the woods."

"I must go after them!"

"No, no! Not alone! Where is Nick?"

"Lying up the road, either stunned or dead from a stone which those villains fired at us. Did they hurt you?"

"I am not injured in the least—only very nervous."

"Wait here and I will follow them. No! I won't permit you to run the risk. Alone they will kill you."

"But, Jennie, they will get out of reach with your little brother."

"Never mind that, now," she answered. "You are not equal to three of them, for you are not armed, and they would be sure to get the best of you again. It is sheer folly to attempt the impossible, Al. I know that your courage is equal to the task, but your strength is not."

The boy felt deeply chagrined over his defeat, but he realized that she spoke the truth, and he sighed and said anxiously:

"I hate to let them get away with the kid, but it can't be helped; so I will go back to Nick and see if he is alive yet. Come along; it will not do for you to remain here, for they might come back at you and make it very unpleasant. I'll get assistance and we'll go after those villains and run them down. I am bound that they shall not keep your brother, if there is any way for me to recover him."

The pony was standing by a tree quietly enough now, and Al and Jennie ran back to the road, where they arrived just in time to see Nick rising.

He had a nasty wound on his head where the stone had struck him, and his face was all bloody and as white as a sheet.

"Al!" he cried tremblingly. "Safe?"

"Oh, I am all right, but you were laid out with a stone."

"My head feels as if a dynamite cartridge had exploded inside of it."

"Let me bind up that wound, or you will bleed to death," said Jennie, and she tied her handkerchief over the boy's head.

"Where is the kid?" asked Nick uneasily.

"The hobos got away with him," answered Al in discouraged tones.

"You boys get into this carriage, and I will drive you both over to Doctor Grimes, for you both need his attention," said Jennie.

"To the police station first," said Al quickly. "We can stand our bruises a little longer without injury, I guess. Every moment is precious, as far as notifying the police is concerned."

"Very well," assented Jennie, and the next moment they were racing up the road and speeding into town on the way to the station-house.

As the vehicle pulled up before the brick building, Al jumped out, and hurrying inside he saw the captain behind his desk.

"Hello, Adams!" was the officer's greeting, as a smile spread over his face. "Looks as if you had been in a fight."

"So I was, sir."

"Come to make a complaint against anyone?"

"Yes. You know about Mr. Harlow's son?"

"He told me the whole story."

"Well, someone hired the tramps who escaped us that day to abduct Bud again, and they got the little fellow."

"Serious business. Give me the details."

Al complied as briefly as possible, and as soon as he had finished the captain rang a handbell, and two officers came from an inner room.

The captain told them what Al had said, and finished with:

"Go to the place where the boy was taken, get on the trail of the tramps, and don't you come back until you bring the boy and his abductors with you. Do you understand?"

The two officers nodded and withdrew.

Al then went outside, and having told Jennie what he had done, he got into the buggy, and she headed for the doctor's.

"I dread to go home and tell my parents what happened," she exclaimed. "It will drive them wild with alarm."

"Then don't do it," advised Al. "Why not wait until we learn the result of the officers' search?"

Jennie eagerly snatched at this suggestion, and as she pulled up in front of the doctor's she said to Al:

"I am going over to my friend Daisy Robinson's house for an hour or two. I shall remain there until I get some news from the police."

"That's the plan!" assented Al. "And as soon as Nick and I are fixed we intend to go off and aid the officers in the hunt."

Jennie left the two boys, and they went into the physician's office and had their injuries attended to.

As they returned to the street Al asked his chum:

"If the tramps went in a straight line through the woods, where would they fetch up?"

"At the old abandoned lime quarry," answered Nick promptly.

"A good place for the hobos to hide, eh?"

"None better."

"Then we shall take a short-cut for the quarry."

(To be continued)

PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, MAY 25, 1927

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INTERESTING ARTICLES

The University of Paris is said to have 17,000 students; the Mohammedan University in Cairo, 10,000; the University of Berlin, 9,600; the universities of Moscow and of St. Petersburg, each 9,000; while Columbia University, in New York City, has nearly 8,000.

American candies are exported in larger or smaller quantities pretty much all over the world, and our candy exports are steadily increasing. We send some to Europe. You will now find American candies on sale in London, Paris and Berlin. Lots of American candies are sold in South Africa and are sold also in considerable quantities in India. You can buy them, for instance, in Calcutta, and they are sold in Australia. They are sold in many places around the world, and then, coming around this way again, they are sold in Mexico and all the Central American countries and all through the West Indies and throughout South America.

The forging of cimeter blades in Japan was once a flourishing industry and the workers formed a close and powerful corporation. But the industry has declined for years, and now only two makers are left—Messrs. Sonkyama and Myamoto. No young Japanese has come forward to offer himself as an apprentice, and the question was referred to the Mikado, with a view of perpetuating the industry. The Mikado has come to the rescue and has founded two scholarships of \$500 to induce two lads to offer themselves for initiation into the art and mystery of making cimeter blades.

The large red flying squirrel is interesting, but not beautiful. It is wholly nocturnal, and, like most nocturnal animals, is extremely surly and spiteful if disturbed in the daytime. It is as large as a cat, with a face like a rabbit's. Its coloring is very brilliant for a mammal, and in general appearance it resembles some curious monster in a Chinese painting. The fur is a rich and deep chestnut on its back, light chestnut below, its head white, and its eye a dull, pale gray. The wide

parachute membrane between its legs is covered with fur, and its tail is long, thickly furred and round. This squirrel does not "fly," in the proper sense of the word, but in the forests its parachute membrane answers its purpose almost equally as well as wings. It runs with a wonderful agility up the trunk of the tree, and to the end of a branch, and then takes a flying leap, with its limbs extended to the utmost, and the wide flesh membrane stretched. This "aerial slide" carries it forward and downward to a horizontal distance of perhaps forty or fifty yards, and it is noticed that, as in the case of birds when making use of their powers of descent with fixed pinions, the squirrel throws itself upward, and ascends slightly at the close of the "flight," perching on the bough it aims at with all the lightness of a pigeon descending from a tower to some point upon the roof below.

LAUGHS

Biggs—Dobbs has remarkable self-control. Boggs—Has he? Biggs—Why, he can talk through a telephone without losing his temper.

First Passenger—Does the train stop here long enough for us to get dinner? Second Passenger—No; only long enough for us to pay for it.

The Mother—How is my Johnny getting on at school? The Teacher—He is rather backward in his studies, but then he is very forward in his manners.

Mendicant—Please, mum, I ain't eaten nuthin' but dry bread for a week. Stout Lady (who is trying to reduce weight)—Gracious, I wish I had your will power.

"My muvver's awful funny," said the three-year-old. "Why, Jack?" "She said I couldn't play out in ner rain, an' nen took me upstairs an' put me in her baf tub."

Little Willie—Say, pa, did you ever have another wife besides ma? Pa—No, Willie. But why do you ask? Little Willie—The family record in the Bible says you married Anna Domini, 1877.

"Well, Miss Mulcahy, Oi see be th' papers Danny's been discharged from the pinitinchery," observed Mrs. O'Hooligan. "Yis," sighed Mrs. Mulcahy. "Danny niver could hould any koinde of a job."

Taddy, aged 4, often called on his nearest neighbor, Mrs. Brown, who petted him a good deal and usually gave him a couple of nice cookies, and if she happened to forget to pass them out, he sometimes reminded her of it. His father learned of this and chided him for begging, and told him he must not do so any more. A day or two later Taddy came home with cookie crumbs in evidence. "Have you been begging cookies from Mrs. Brown again?" asked the father rather sternly. "No," said Taddy, "I didn't beg for her any. I just said this house smells as if it was full of cookies, but what's that to me?"

The Strange Story of Alfred Britt

There lately arrived at a country house in Ohio a man with a record so strange that it should be preserved in history.

He was received under the name of Alfred Britt, and his age was recorded at twenty-five.

He was partially paralyzed, the result of a bullet wound in the back, and, although he was an inmate of the house for a year or more, it was not until a few days before his death that he related any facts about himself.

Britt was born in Boston, and when three or four days old was put into a basket with a supply of clothes and \$100 in money and left on the doorstep of a humble mechanic named Alexander Gray.

It was one of a score of cases occurring every year, but instead of the boy being bundled off to the poorhouse or an asylum he was taken in and adopted.

Gray was doubtless decided in his action by the money, which, to a man of his circumstances, and in those days of a dollar-a-day and store pay at that, seemed a fortune.

However, he had no children of his own, though having been married six or seven years, and the wife gladly fell in with the idea of adopting the little stranger as their own child.

The fine texture of the clothes and the roll of money were proofs that the baby's father belonged to the wealthy class. The basket and clothes were laid away, the child was tenderly cared for, and the money was used to better the condition of the family. Only two or three of the neighbors knew of the child being left and none of them knew all the circumstances. One day, when the baby had grown to be a child three years old, and could run about, he was playing in the back yard when a man sought to steal him away. The stranger entered by the alley gate and picked little Alfred up, but a savage dog owned by Gray attacked the man and made him drop his prey. Mrs. Gray saw it all from a window, and the man's action convinced her abduction was his object.

A week later, while the boy was in the yard again one afternoon, a large stone was hurled at him and barely missed his head. Some boys saw the miscreant as he crept up the alley to throw the stone, and the police were furnished with a description, but the search for him availed nothing. The detective employed in the case was told all about the child and he came to the conclusion that someone had an object in putting the boy out of the way. Little Alfred was remarkably handsome, and perhaps it was feared his features would betray his relationship to someone. Gray was cautious to keep him close, and he did so for several weeks. One November night after lamp-light the boy pulled aside the curtain from a window looking out upon the yard of a factory. He had not stood there over two minutes when a shot was fired at him. The bullet cut a lock of his hair from his head and was buried in the opposite wall of the room. The new outrage was reported, and the detective found that someone

had stood at the corner of a lumber pile about twenty feet from the window to fire the shot.

The ground gave evidence that he had been on the watch from that point for several nights. There was a patient search, but no reward. It was clear now that the boy's life was sought after, and as Gray had had an offer of a good situation in Cleveland he determined to remove to that city. With the help of the detective he made his preparations very secretly, his goods leaving the house after midnight, and the boy being taken on the train dressed as a girl. He reached his new home without adventure, and enjoyed a rest for nearly a year before the enemy made another move. One day a man came into the shop where Gray was at work and made inquiries of him and ascertained that he was Alexander Gray. Two days after that, as Alfred was playing outside the gate at home with two other children, the same man who had visited the shop drove up with a horse and buggy and alighted.

He certainly meant to seize and carry off the boy, but his object was defeated by Mrs. Gray, who, with an acquaintance, suddenly turned the corner on their way home from a shopping expedition.

They ran full upon the stranger as he was exhibiting a paper of candies to the children, and he stammered an apology and got into his buggy and drove off. After this episode Gray reasoned that the Boston parties had in some manner traced his whereabouts, and that he was almost helpless to checkmate their machinations. He subsequently learned that a stranger had made inquiries for him in several other cities, thus showing that some trusted agent had been sent out to hunt the whole country over until the whole family was found. Gray had a brother in Indianapolis, and after some necessary correspondence the boy was shipped there to the care of a trusted friend. It was a move which baffled the enemy for three long years. For the first three months after Alfred left every expedient was resorted to that the whereabouts of the child might be discovered.

Pretended agents and peddlers called at the house in hopes to get sight of the child, if he were there, and to quiz the mother when they found no traces of him. Gray had a box at the post office, and strangers came there and asked for his letters, but could not obtain them. So-called detectives waylaid Gray and charged that he was under suspicion of having killed the boy in a fit of passion, and that he must produce Alfred or suffer arrest, but they could not scare him into revealing the secret.

Some of the neighbors got a promise of \$500 reward to tell the boy's whereabouts, but as none of them had been taken into the confidence of the Grays they could make no headway. Now and then, for a whole year after, the boy left Cleveland, Gray had proof that the enemy was on the alert, but they finally seemed to tire of the useless chase, and for the next two years nothing occurred to alarm him anew.

When Alfred was seven years old he was so handsome in feature and bright of intellect that he was often pointed out on the street and on three or four occasions his wonderful resemblance to a prominent citizen of Boston was remarked by New Englanders.

Mrs. Gray mourned so much for him that Gray

decided to remove to Cincinnati, where he hoped to have Alfred with him. He made a secret move again, got the boy from Indianapolis, and had scarcely got settled in his new home when the enemy appeared, having probably tracked his every step in spite of his precautions. Alfred was run over a crosswalk by a horse and buggy as he was coming from school. The children with him declared that the man must have done it on purpose, and that he drove rapidly away after the accident.

It was generally set down as a piece of carelessness, but Gray fully and firmly believed that it was a new move on the part of the enemy.

The horse and vehicle were so well described that he found the owner, but all he could learn was that a stranger had hired the outfit for a couple of hours, and returned it in good order. The boy had an arm broken and was severely bruised, but was out again in a few weeks. That was the last attempt on his life until he was twelve years old.

Soon after that episode Mr. Gray died, and the widow and the boy went to Louisville to reside with one of her brothers. Here Alfred remained until he was eighteen, without another attempt on his life. Mrs. Gray died, and one of the local newspapers, in making notice of the fact, made a sensational notice about the founding, and narrated some of the attempts upon his life. A month had not passed before he was shot at through his chamber window.

The would-be murderer could see the young man's shadow on the curtain, but his bullet failed to reach the target aimed at.

It so happened that a policeman was at hand, and arrested the man who fired the shot, but he alleged that it was an accident and was not held. He was an entire stranger to Louisville, but explained his presence by asserting that he was selling county rights for a patent churn, and by exhibiting a model. Alfred had been told of all that had passed before, and soon after this attempt, and unbeknown to any of his friends, he secretly left Louisville and went to Missouri and Kansas, where he remained until about a year ago. He was then twenty-five years of age, and as he had not been pursued for seven years he deemed it safe to return. He had not maintained correspondence with his friends, and he returned to Louisville to find them gone and their whereabouts unknown.

The relative at Indianapolis had removed to Colorado and could not be definitely located.

Britt was on his way to Columbus, Ohio, and was standing on the platform of a passenger car while the train was just leaving a station between Dayton and Xenia, when he was shot in the back by some unknown and unseen person.

It was just at dusk, and he fell in a heap, and was unconscious for a quarter of an hour.

Whether he was shot by a passenger, someone who leaped off, or by someone standing beside the track, could not be told.

It was looked upon as an accident by all except Britt.

He was sent to a hospital, cared for while his money lasted, and then went to the poor house of his own accord.

When told that he might live a few months, but

could never get well, he expressed his thankfulness that such was the case.

When his last days were at hand he told his story, and added that death would be a relief.

He had been haunted and hunted until he felt that the grave alone would bring him immunity.

TOUGHER PAPER MONEY

Uncle Sam's paper currency will be twice as tough in the near future. The Bureau of Standards in Washington, D. C., has devised paper twice as resistant to wear and tear in folding.

Treasury officials have been concerned over the increasing need of replacing worn paper money.

DREAM SAVES BOY'S LIFE

Dreaming that some one had stolen his toy wagon from the front yard of his home in Detroit, Michigan, Morris Couzens, eight, awakened and ran down stairs to investigate. The action probably saved his life, for as he reached the lower floor he discovered the house in flames and called to neighbors for help.

Before aid arrived, however, his mother, Rose Couzens, and three brothers, Meryle, fifteen months; James, eight years, and John, two, trapped in the rear of the house, were burned to death.

The fire is believed to have been caused by an overheated stove.

SOMETHING ABOUT PORPOISES

The only porpoise oil factory on the Atlantic coast is established about six miles below Cape Hatteras and near Hatteras Inlet. Along this coast porpoises are plentiful through about six months of the year, and there are three crews of fishermen who make a business of catching them for the oil factory. For the reason that porpoises are easily frightened the fisherman must be wary and quiet who would meet with success. The method employed is to impound a school in a wide-meshed net first and then to take them with a sweep net of much finer mesh. The porpoises are 5 to 10 feet in length, big and powerful. They are skinned for their hides and the blubber is removed. The hides are salted down and sent in their green state to a tannery in New Jersey to be tanned and made into leather. Porpoise hide is used for shoe strings, pocketbooks and traveling bags or suit cases. The oil from the blubber is dried out at the factory on the beach and then sent to New Bedford, Mass., for refining. The valuable head oil, the famous porpoise oil that is used for oiling watches and other delicate machinery, is obtained from the marrow of the porpoise's lower jawbone and from a small quantity of blubber found between the snout and the blowhole. In making the oil this blubber and the marrow are mixed. The production of this oil may range from half a pint to a quart from one porpoise. Refined porpoise oil for jeweler's use is worth from \$900 to \$1,200 a barrel. The body oil obtained from a porpoise amounts ordinarily to 13 or 14 gallons. This is used for various purposes, and brings far less than the head oil. The carcasses are made into fertilizer.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

From Mount Genevieve, a peak in Gilpin county, Colo., a person can see into five states. On a clear day the observer can discern the Uintah mountains of eastern Utah, the Medicine Bow range of Wyoming, the tips of the Rockies in New Mexico and the principal peaks of Colorado. The plains stretching to the east are plainly visible clear into Nebraska.

According to those who sell them, bicycles are coming in again. The sales of this season, thus far, have been far greater than those of last year at this time, and those in turn were greater than 1926. The figures do not come anywhere near the enormous totals of the late '90s, when the bicycle was king, and if you didn't ride you were nobody. Now, however, the reaction is being felt. For a few seasons after the bicycle boom flattened out like a punctured tire there wasn't any more interest in the bicycle than there is in a cent in a busted savings bank. The stalwart few stuck to the game. In the cities the new boom isn't felt so much as in the towns.

There is a fortune of many millions in store for the man who can discover a substitute for leather. The price of the real article is steadily rising, dealers say, and the reason is that in spite of the duty removed the growth of the world's population is faster than the increase in the number of cattle raised. "There is a growing disproportion between the number of hides marketed and the demand for leather," said an expert. "The question is where the future supply will come from in quantities sufficient to meet the country's future needs. If some genius will only find a substitute for leather he'll be a wealthy man in a day."

One of the most interesting places in the Rocky Mountain region, especially from a naturalist's point of view is the big game preserve on the Stirrup Ranch, in the northern part of Fremont County, near Black Mountain, thirty-four miles northwest of Canyon City. This preserve, 2,000 acres in extent, and surrounded by a woven wire fence seven feet in height, is the property of a man who finds the rearing of elk and deer a pleasant diversion from the ordinary monotony of ranch life.

Sale by candle, a method of auction that was once very common through England and Scotland, still survives in the north of England. A "judge" and his secretary take their seats at the appointed place, attended by a crier and a servant provided with a box of tiny candles, each of which will burn one minute. At a given signal a candle is lighted, and the bidding for the object offered begins. At each offer from a would-be purchaser the burning candle is extinguished and a new one lighted, and the article is disposed of only when a candle burns itself out ere a fresh bid has been announced by the crier.

MOTOR ACCIDENTS DECREASE IN OPENING MONTH

Statistics of motor vehicle fatalities for the month of January compiled by the National Safety

Council show a slight decrease over that month of 126. The total deaths in the United States for the first month of the year are estimated at 1,430, averaging about 46 a day, as against 49 a day in 1296 and 65 a day for January, 1925. While the decrease over the corresponding month one year ago is not large, the figures are nevertheless encouraging as indicating a rowing national consciousness in a more careful observance of traffic and highway safety regulations.

It is also interesting to note that the highway accident reports recently issued for Massachusetts and Connecticut—two States where motoring is very heavy throughout the year—show an appreciable decrease with the preceding year. In Massachusetts the fatalities for the year were 705, which was less than in 1925, while Connecticut had 332 deaths, a decrease of 22 over the former year. Massachusetts also showed a decrease of 385 in the number of persons injured, the total being 25,351. Connecticut, however, in this respect had an increase, persons injured aggregating 9,802, as against 7,992 in 1925.

"Connecticut is fortunate in having a good law," states Ethel Usher, statistician of the Motor Vehicle Bureau, "but it differs from other States in that more accidents are required to be reported, consequently making the basis more voluminous, so that comparisons may possibly be more accurate."

"It is fair to bear in mind that, due to the present lack of uniformity in requirements for reporting accidents, and because Connecticut's requirements are more severe in that every accident resulting in personal injury or fatality or property damage where the estimated damage is valued at more than \$10 must be reported. Connecticut will have a higher accident rate in comparison."

The total number of motor vehicle accidents reported for Connecticut in 1926 was 24,326, as against 22,508 in 1925, and property damage represented \$2,399,346, a slight increase over the 1925 estimate of \$2,130,877. The four chief causes of accidents were inattention, failure to grant right of way, skidding and driving on the wrong side of the road.

Intoxicated drivers proved more of a menace both in Connecticut and Massachusetts than during the previous year. These irresponsible drivers caused 393 accidents in Connecticut, an increase of 35 over 1925. In Massachusetts, Registrar Frank A. Goodwin reports that 4,803 licenses were revoked due to intoxication, a large percentage of the total number of 18,705 licenses suspended or revoked during the year.

"The figures for the year," says Register Goodwin, "give hope that the tide of motor vehicle accidents may not only have been checked but may have taken a positive downward course. In 1926 there was an increase of persons licensed to operate from 698,378 to 776,576, amounting to 11 per cent., and an increase in all kinds of motor vehicles on the roads of 7.8 per cent. In spite of the greater number of drivers and of cars fatalities diminished 6.6 per cent. from the year before, and persons injured diminished 1.4 per cent."—*N. Y. Times*.

TIMELY TOPICS

Among unusual professions for women in England is that of official carpet sewer to the House of Commons. The incumbent has held her present position for thirty years.

Arizona has a population of 250,000, of which fully three-fourths are American born. The Indians number about 25,000, the Navajos leading with 15,000.

The Russians are manufacturing a fabric from the fiber of a filamentous stone from the Siberian mines which is said to be of so durable a nature that it is practically indestructible. The material is soft to the touch and pliable in the extreme, and when soiled has only to be placed in a fire to be made absolutely clean.

A record herring catch for this seasons is 110,000, landed at Scarborough by the Golden Hope, Scotch herring fleet. The fishermen received forty cents a thousand for the herrings, and took in about \$450 for the night's fishing.

In the Philippine Islands, one frequently sees a raft of coconuts being floated down the river to market. The buoyant nuts are closely packed into a circle, braced across with bamboos and tied with fiber, and the queer craft, with its native paddler, is then ready for the trip downstream to a point where the raft will be broken up and the coconuts sold.

There are now only 45,000 lace makers in Belgium, as compared with 150,000 in 1875. The maximum wages paid to the most skillful lace makers never exceed 30 cents a day, and out of 2,500 workers only about twenty are paid the maximum.

Mrs. M. A. George from Portland, New York, was sitting by a window sewing when an electric flash from a trolley car was reflected from her needle into her eyes so sharply she was blinded.

Physicians fear the sight of one eye is lost entirely, but she will probably be able to see with the other.

In France and other parts of the Continent of Europe the sportsmen have a curious custom which is a survival of the classic days of Greece and Rome—namely, the presenting of laurel wreaths to victorious athletes in great sporting events. If a man wins some long distance running or cycling race he is loaded up with these tangible tokens of appreciation, and for the time looks like a bereaved relation hastening to a funeral in a running or cycling suit.

There are some strange laws in the Coog islands in the eastern Pacific. The population is Maori, and each island legislates for itself. The island council of Manihiki, one of the group, has in force an ordinance to regulate village life within the island. It begins by re-enacting "the ancient law of Manihiki as to dogs" and sentencing to death any dogs on the island. Pigs are not to wander at

large, and any person going after 9 a. m. may be arrested and taken to the courthouse to explain his reason for being abroad. No debt incurred by a native inhabitant is to be recoverable in any court. Selling or giving intoxicating liquor to any native is punishable with a \$50 fine.

In 1870 a Scotchman named Johnston patented a treasure safe for ships designed to render loss of specie and other treasures by wreck impossible. His proposal was that an unsinkable safe should be suspended at the ship's davits, ready to be lowered into the water at a moment's notice, and he invented a contrivance by means of which the safe would detach itself on emergency and float about until picked up by another vessel. Ship's captains, however, declined to entertain the thought of having a safe full of money hanging at the davits ready to the hand of any who cared to trust to a dark night and the navigable qualities of the chest to make off with it.

The Japanese manner of settling quarrels is quite original. When one man has offended another the injured party gives notice that he is angry by drawing in the sand before the door of the offender a circle with a straight line across it, indicating that his affection, which would have been eternal, has been cut in two. Friends of both parties then shut them up. They parley a while, then pretend to be born again, prattle as little children and finally as men become reconciled and embrace. Should one be refractory and refuse to be conciliated he is ostracized by the community so effectually that he is soon brought to terms.

The bridegroom in Mexico finds marriage a very costly business. He is expected to buy the trousseau, and he is fortunate if he can satisfy the extravagance sanctioned by custom and prompted by ardent passion. Young men from the country are said to be often seen in the City of Mexico purchasing all sorts of finery for the ladies of their choice, and the spectacle they present as they consult the measurements, which they carry with them for all sorts of garments, is very amusing.

Seven or eight years ago a plant was established near Lyons, France, for the manufacture of paving glass. Numerous descriptions of the new paving material were published and a brilliant future was predicted for it. The city authorities of Lyons permitted the manufacturer to lay a specimen section of glass pavement in the Place de la Republique, a center for heavy traffic. The glass bricks failed to stand the test of wear. The edges of them were soon broken and splintered and many of the blocks split in two, so that within two years it became necessary to remove the widely heralded innovation and substitute stone or wood. The city officials are agreed that glass pavement can be used under favorable circumstances for sidewalks, but not for the middle of streets.

PLUCK AND LUCK

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